



# THE INDEPENDENT

Nº 3,334

FRIDAY 27 JUNE 1997

WEATHER: Wet (R 45p) 40p

9 PAGES OF MUSIC IN THE TABLOID

**JUDGING OASIS;  
HANGING WITH THE FUGEES;  
DECODING VERDI**

THE COMMENTATORS PAGE 19

**SUZANNE MOORE:  
DEALING WITH THE  
PAIN OF DEATH**



**SUMMER DAYS  
SUMMER NIGHTS**

## Mud tops the festival bill as rain rules centre court

Paul McCann

The Glastonbury Festival site has turned into a "bog of melted chocolate" awaiting the 90,000 music fans who will show up today looking for a good time.

But while mud and rain is viewed as an essential part of the Glastonbury experience, tennis fans at Wimbledon were faced with a second day of continuous rain. Play was finally abandoned without a ball being struck at 6pm and Alan Mills, the tournament referee, said he was considering another People's Sunday, when anyone could turn up and get into Wimbledon just by queuing.

By this stage in the tournament 226 matches should have been completed but by Wednesday evening only 94 matches had been played.

Meanwhile in Somerset, police advised everyone going to Glastonbury to take wellingtons and warm, waterproof clothing and to prepare for parking delays because of the mud. But outdoor clothing specialists in central London were reporting that they had sold out of wellingtons.

Tractor-loads of stones and wood chips were yesterday being hauled in to cover the sludge, and gas heaters were being set up. At one point yesterday the police described conditions as "total chaos", with only one of the 14 access lanes to the site passable.

The majority of campers will arrive today, but the site had already become a quagmire yesterday, a festival spokesman said. "More and more mud just keeps oozing out of the ground," one steward said. "You could say it looks like a bog of melted chocolate," he added.

The festival is facing its biggest wash-out since 1985 when most festival-goers gave up the battle to stay dry and learned to love the mud after it rained non-stop from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon.

Michael Eavis, owner of the farm where the festival is held, tried to put a cheery spin on the weather. "It's going to be gloomy in the skies," he said, "but very promising on the ground. It's like an outward bound course... It's character-building for our youngsters and will make them better and stronger."



Wet outlook: Fred Perry's statue at Wimbledon, and Glastonbury boot-sellers Photographs: David Ashdown, Brian Harris

Police have closed off the esplanade and warned anyone not going to the festival to give the area a wide berth.

Forecasts for the weekend ahead predict more rain.

Michael Eavis hit out yesterday at an article in this week's *Big Issue* magazine which describes how people without tickets managed to get through the festival's fence. "I am furious about this... It is quite unbelievable and completely counterproductive for our cause," he said.

Adding to organisers' worries are reports that the campaign group Reclaim the Streets is planning an organised assault on the perimeter fence as a protest at the end of free festivals.



## Brown's radical Budget

Diane Coyle  
Economics Editor  
Colin Brown  
Chief Political Correspondent

Gordon Brown will signal a long-term overhaul of the tax and benefit systems in next Wednesday's Budget. He will also announce radical plans to reshape the entire Budget process.

Beyond the central measures of his welfare-to-work scheme for the young and long-term unemployed, financed by the windfall tax, the Chancellor will outline his intention to improve work incentives and reduce the burden of taxation on the low-paid.

The Budget will also emphasise the use of the tax system to cut back on pollution and encourage energy-saving. The Chancellor and John Prescott, Deputy Prime Minister, yesterday met in private to discuss the inclusion of "green taxes" which will form a key part of the Budget.

They discussed a hike in the duty on petrol and diesel, and it is believed there will be increases in other environmental taxes, such as the landfill tax, while VAT on loft insulation is expected to be cut in line with the reduction in VAT on domestic fuel from 8 per cent to 5 per cent.

Senior ministers believe that Britain, like California, will not object to taxes that are seen as environmentally friendly, making Mr Prescott's superministry, in charge of the environment, transport and the regions, a vehicle for new tax revenues.

Tony Blair staked out the Government's commitment to reducing greenhouse gases in his speech to the United Nations on Monday, in a clear signal that more green taxes are on the way. The long-term options being considered include road tolls, road pricing, and replacing the road fund licence with higher petrol duties.

The Chancellor is expected to confirm the Government's manifesto pledge to introduce a 10p starting rate of income tax. Mr Brown will indicate plans to shift away from expensive tax reliefs and allowances that disproportionately help the well-off.

The most vulnerable of these are mortgage interest tax relief and the married couples' allowance, which between them cost £5.5bn a year. Tax relief on

pension contributions, which channels about £6bn a year to top rate taxpayers, is a longer-term candidate for reform. The most likely alternative would be to introduce a flat-rate tax credit on pension contributions.

This ties in with the approach being taken by the welfare-to-

work scheme, which encourages pension saving. The move will harm profits in the short term, but the proceeds could be channelled back to companies.

The Chancellor will set out a new approach to future Budgets. He will draw a parallel between the transparency he has introduced to the setting of interest rates, by making the Bank of England independent and accountable, and the need for the same kind of openness about taxes and spending.

In his speech on Wednesday he will also set out the Government's intention to run a macroeconomic policy that delivers stable growth and low inflation, setting this in the context of the need to remain competitive in a global market.

The recent assessment of the Treasury's economic assumptions by the National Audit Office made it plain that Mr Brown has taken a cautious approach to public finances. Actual government borrowing this year and next could well be lower than the Budget "Red Book" will indicate because the economic boom will boost tax revenues.

benefit for 16- to 18-year-olds, in return for means tested educational allowances.

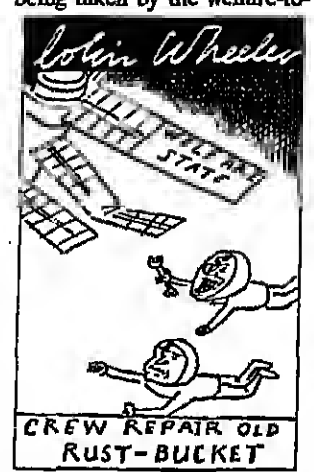
With an emphasis on creating jobs and boosting investment in the long term in his Budget speech, Mr Brown is expected to encourage companies to retain profits for investment rather than paying them as dividends by ending the dividend tax credit claimed by pension funds. The move will harm profits in the short term, but the proceeds could be channelled back to companies.

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Don Macintyre, page 19



Crew Repair Old Rust-Bucket

work task force, headed by Martin Taylor, chief executive of Barclays. The Chancellor favours boosting low incomes through tax credits in order to get around the way the loss of benefits reduces the incentive to work.

Welfare-to-work will be the core theme of the Budget, and Mr Brown will give details of the training and education schemes to be offered to 18- to 25-year-olds with the money raised from the windfall tax on the privatised utilities. The Chancellor is expected to confirm the scrapping of universal child



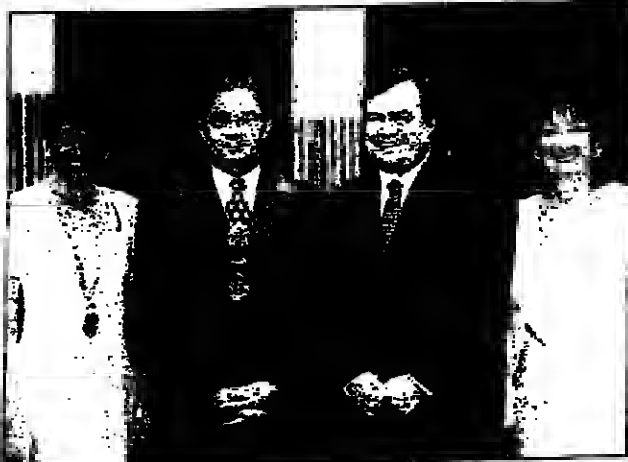
GOLD CUP



SILVER BUCKET

**FOLD, VUEE CLICQUOT GOLD CUP, COMBAT PARA** 28 June-30 July  
**HANLEY BRITISH REUNITS** 3-6 July  
**3RD CORNWALL TERY MATCH V AUSTRALIA, OLD TRAFFORD** 5-7 July  
**HANFORD COURT PALACE INTERNATIONAL FLOWER SHOW** 9-13 July  
**HENLEY FESTIVAL OF MUSIC AND THE ARTS** 9-12 July  
**BESTER GOLF PARK, SALFORD** 13 July  
**18TH OPEN GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP, ROYAL TROUV** 17-20 July  
**COVER WALK** 2-5 August  
**LE FESTIVAL DES QUAT' SAISONS, GREAT MILTON** 3-5 August  
**BURGHLEY HORSE TRIALS, STAMFORD** 11-14 September

## Labour suspends Prescott's ally



Good friends: Margaret Black and her husband John, with John Prescott and his wife, Pauline Photograph: Hull Daily Mail

Christian Wolmar  
Westminster Correspondent

A prominent Labour politician and friend of John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, has been suspended by the Labour Party over allegations that he assaulted three people at an election victory party.

Labour's National Executive Committee is investigating allegations that John Black, who is chairman of the Hull city party, attacked a former Humber-side councillor, David Harris, and John Cherry, the agent of the former Hull MP Stuart Randall, at a victory rally a week after last month's election.

The NEC is conducting a wider investigation into affairs in the Labour-dominated council which has been hit by a number of allegations of impropriety, including a statement last year by Mr Randall that the council was "corrupt". The council denied this vehemently.

Earlier this month, Pat Doyle, the leader of the council, said that he had asked the NEC to hold an investigation so that "the detractors (anonymous or named) will be asked to produce evidence to substantiate specific complaints".

Mr Black, who is also housing chairman of the city council, has been suspended by the NEC from holding any party office until an investigation into the affair is completed. A council spokesman said that he would

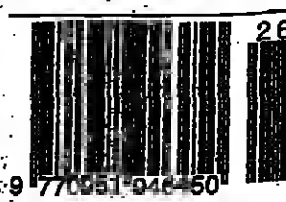
continue as housing chairman because the suspension only related to Labour Party posts. A Labour Party source said: "We are going to use this incident to carry out a full-scale inquiry into Hull as we have been worried about events there for some time." The remit is understood to include investigation of complaints about Mr Black's expenses when he was Lord Mayor two years ago. Mr Black has denied any wrongdoing.

A letter obtained by *The Independent* detailing the complaint from Mr Cherry says that he and Mr Harris were leaving the celebration when they were jumped on and abused by a group which included Mr Black.

Mr Black is a controversial local figure having pushed through the country's first Housing Action Trust, a Tory initiative that involved part-privatising council estates. His work on the council has been praised by Mr Prescott, the MP for Hull East.

Mr Randall stood down as an MP just before the election after a battle with Mr Black whom he was suing for libel because Mr Black alleged he was unsuitable to be an MP.

Mr Black issued a statement last night saying that the Labour Party had informed him that it was a "technical and administrative suspension to enable the inquiry to proceed." He declined to comment when contacted by *The Independent*.



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**Grim wait for Mir men**  
The astronauts on the Mir space station face a grim wait before they can perform a spacewalk to repair the damage caused by a collision with another spacecraft. Page 3

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**Veuve Clicquot**

CHAMPAGNE OF THE SEASON



## significant shorts

## Committee may examine MP's expulsion claims

Claims by a rebel Labour MP that he was threatened with expulsion over devolution could be investigated by Westminster's powerful Standards and Privileges Committee, it emerged last night.

As the row over allegations by Lew Smith exploded into an angry exchange of letters between William Hague and the Prime Minister, a member of the committee suggested that Mr Blair should look to his laurels. Peter Bottomley, a former Conservative minister, said that if Mr Smith complained to the committee as he had threatened to do, it should take the matter seriously.

Last night, Mr Smith said he was considering his next move, but confirmed he was considering a complaint to the Standards and Privileges Committee. He had spoken to the chief whip, Nick Brown, yesterday afternoon and had been told he would not be disciplined for speaking out against his party, he said. Fran Abrams

## Health authorities advised not to sue

Health minister Tess Jowell has warned health authorities not to sue tobacco companies for the costs of treating smokers' illnesses.

Mrs Jowell said she did not want to see health authorities tied up in costly legal action. The decision on whether to sue should be made by the Government, she insisted.

A group of health authorities led by Croydon in south London had earlier appeared ready to sue the tobacco industry, buoyed up by last week's historic £225bn legal settlement in America. US tobacco companies have agreed to pay the money into a compensation fund to help cancer victims in return for legal immunity. It has been estimated that a similar group action against British tobacco firms could net £25bn. Jeremy Laurence

## Tory sleaze report expected soon

The go-ahead for publication of the report into the sleaze allegations against Neil Hamilton, the former Tory minister (pictured), is expected to be given next week at the first meeting of the Commons select committee on standards and privileges.

The committee also has to carry out its own investigation on the evidence in the report by Sir Gordon Downey, Parliamentary Commissioner, and it is likely to call Mr Hamilton to give evidence, before producing its own findings.

Gerald Howarth, a Tory MP and friend of Mr Hamilton, yesterday objected that the committee included new members, who would have no experience of Commons procedures. Colin Brown

## Gas blast leaves 100 homeless

A massive blast which ripped through a south London town block yesterday morning was almost certainly caused by a gas explosion. Eight residents on the Kew Point estate, in Kennington, were injured by flying debris as the blast shattered every window in the 21-storey building and flung rubble up to 100 yards. All were treated for cuts at St Thomas' Hospital and later released. Yesterday, as investigators searched for the cause of the explosion which has left more than 100 people without homes. Spokesmen from Lambeth Council said the building's basement boiler room was the seat of the blast. James Mellow

## Corporate arts sponsorship in crisis

Corporate sponsorship of the arts is in "mid-crisis" according to the businessman with the biggest arts budget in the country.

Rodger Broad, head of British Telecom's sponsorship programme, which will give £1.5m to the arts this year, said the Thatcherite dream of corporate backing was "faltering". There was a "mis-match between what the arts need and what they're getting". "The amount of cash sponsorship of the arts has been decreasing over the years... If you cover up the problem for too long, the problem becomes quite a substantial one." Louise Jury

## Mini golfer hits hole-in-one

Five-year-old Matthew Draper shot himself into the record books yesterday by becoming the youngest golfer in Britain to hit a hole-in-one. Matthew's father, Philip Draper, 35, and other players watched in amazement as his ball sailed down the fairway of the fourth hole at Chervell Edge miniature golf course, at Banbury, before rolling straight into the hole. Mr Draper said: "I knew he had hit it well but I never thought it would go all the way."

Matthew, whose hero is Nick Faldo, said: "It was good. I put my arms out and went 'Yeah'."

## people



NOT SO SMOOTH: A Jamaican magistrate yesterday said he would issue an arrest warrant for the singer Sade (above), after she failed to answer charges of dangerous driving. The 38-year-old, who sold millions of albums in the 1980s, and had been living in Jamaica with her partner and their child, was reported to have returned to Britain. She has already denied the charges

## Mother loses rights battle for parents of premature babies

A mother yesterday failed in her bid to effect a change in the law to allow parents of premature babies to insist they are given intensive care.

Kirsty Cassidy, 22, lost her case against a doctor who decided not to resuscitate her prematurely born daughter, Rebecca, because she was "non-viable".

Sheriff Principal Robert Hay, giving judgment after a fatal accident inquiry at Ayrshire County Hospital, Scotland, said the decision made by the doctor was both reasonable and in the best interests of the child.

Rebecca was born at the hospital on 7 September last year, at between 23 and 25 weeks gestation, and weighing 1lb 4oz. During the four-day inquiry earlier this month, Mrs Cassidy, a mother-of-two, accused her paediatrician, Dr Faisal al-Zidgali, of failing in his duty to keep the child alive by resuscitating her.

She described how he had come into the delivery room, where a midwife was giving the baby oxygen, took one look at the baby and said: "I am sorry, she is too small, she is not viable. There is nothing I can do." He had then walked out.

Dr al-Zidgali later told the inquiry that it would have

been "futile, foolish and heroic" to try to save the baby's life. He said her heart rate was 10 beats per minute instead of 120-160 and that her skin was gelatinous and grey, indicating that there was not enough oxygenated blood in her body.

In his 11-page judgment yesterday, Sheriff Principal Hay said he was satisfied that "there were no reasonable precautions whereby the death might have been avoided".

However, he criticised Dr al-Zidgali for classifying Rebecca's death as a spontaneous abortion instead of a live birth - a decision that was later reversed. "If Rebecca's birth and death had been recorded accurately as a live birth and neonatal death, and not initially as a miscarriage or abortion, her parents might have been saved some unnecessary distress," he said.

Mrs Cassidy said later that she and her husband, John, would carry on the campaign and might take it to the European Court of Human Rights.

A spokeswoman for the British Medical Association said clinical decisions had to be left to the doctor. "He should be left to make them based on the evidence he has got." Jeremy Laurence

## Emily Lloyd walks out on West End

The actress Emily Lloyd last night pulled out of *Pygmalion* - her West End debut. Neither her agent, publicist, nor the play's producers would comment on her sudden departure.

Lloyd, best-known for her acclaimed portrayal of the young Cynthia Payne in *Wish You Were Here*, was due to open on Monday in the George Bernard Shaw play at the Theatre Royal, Windsor.

The 26-year-old was to have starred as Eliza Doolittle alongside Michael Elphick and Roy Marsden.

The production is due to transfer to the Albery Theatre in the West End on 22 July, but now it will be without its star.

Lloyd's London-based agent, Ben Jones, said: "Yes, it is true she has pulled out, but I cannot say any more."

A statement from the play's publicist was expected later.

Shaw's play centres on Professor Higgins' wager with Colonel Pickering that he can transform a common Covent Garden flower girl into a lady fit to be presented at Court.

It was adapted for the screen and became a hugely successful film, *My Fair Lady*, starring Rex Harrison and Audrey Hepburn.



## Laker to fight BA in US court

Sir Freddie Laker, the low-fare aviation pioneer, is once again taking on British Airways through the courts, it was announced yesterday.

Sir Freddie, who now runs Laker Airways services between Florida and the UK, is suing BA in a US court over the allocation of take-off and landing slots at Gatwick airport.

In the 1980s, Sir Freddie won a £6m settlement from BA and other airlines after his claims that major carriers caused the collapse of his transatlantic Skytrain service in 1982. His victory ensured that Sir Freddie would be remembered as a plucky David fighting a ruthless and bureaucratic Goliath.

Sir Freddie filed his latest lawsuit in his adopted home town of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, under American anti-competition laws.

His airline claims BA is in violation of these laws by "exclusionary tactics that deny Laker Airways a fair opportunity to compete on the Miami-London scheduled service route".

Sir Freddie, now 75, said: "Our efforts to resolve the matter were rebuffed by BA. It is a great pity."

Randeep Ramesh

## briefing

## DIVORCE

## Mediation often turns blind eye to domestic violence

Mediators and welfare officers working with separating and divorcing parents urgently need to review their methods for identifying victims of domestic violence, according to research supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

The study warns that women are at risk of intimidation by violent former partners, during the mediation process, which is designed to help couples reach agreements over money, matrimonial homes and children.

But one of the researchers, Dr Marianne Hester, of the School for Policy Studies, at the University of Bristol, said: "Our survey found that many mediators are tending to minimise the existence and impact of domestic violence."

"Those who were least likely to screen for domestic violence were most likely to allow mediation to go ahead, with potentially dangerous consequences."

Patricia Wynn Davies

## SMOKING

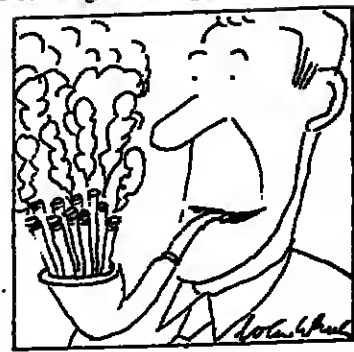
## Cigars can reduce cancer risk

Cigarette smokers who have difficulty giving up can halve their risk of dying of lung cancer or heart disease by switching to pipes or cigars.

A study of 21,000 male smokers followed from the late 1970s to the early 1990s found those who had switched to pipes or cigars in the 20 years before the study began smoked less tobacco than those who continued with cigarettes, and this largely explained their reduced risk.

However, their risk was 50 per cent higher than pipe and cigar smokers who had never smoked cigarettes, probably because of their habit of inhaling, according to the study by researchers at St Bartholomew's and the Royal London School of Medicine published in the *British Medical Journal*.

All pipe and cigar smokers have a higher risk of lung cancer than lifelong non-smokers - and than former smokers who have given up. Jeremy Laurence



## TRANSPORT

## Speed limits are largely ignored

Nearly three-quarters of drivers break the 30mph speed limit and nearly 60 per cent exceed the 70mph limit on motorways, figures out yesterday revealed. Speeding is so widespread that nearly a fifth of drivers break the 80mph limit, according to the figures from the Department for Transport and the Environment.

The figures were published on the same day as campaigners called on the Government to make road policing an integral part of the fight against crime, in an effort to reduce deaths and injuries.

Mary Williams, director for road safety group Brake, said that more than 3,000 people died every year on the roads. She added: "The death of you or your partner on the road is as likely as winning £10 next time you play the lottery."

Johanna Montagu

## PRISONS

## Women more likely to end up inside

The theory that more women are becoming involved in crime was dismissed yesterday in a report by the National Association of Probation Officers. The report shows there has been no discernible increase in female crime but a far harsher sentencing climate.

Harry Fletcher, NAPO assistant general secretary, said: "The number of women convicted of serious offences has fallen during the last five years by 16 per cent, but the female prison population increased by a staggering 76 per cent."

The report casts doubt on the potential effectiveness of the upsurge in incarceration. An analysis of more than 500 women in closed jails and 200 in hostels since the beginning of the year shows that offending was related to drug or alcohol abuse in 84 per cent of cases. Patricia Wynn Davies

## EVOLUTION

## Songbirds originated Down Under

Songbirds sang their first twittering arias in Australia more than 50 million years ago, according to researchers who developed their theory after analysing some tiny scraps of fossilised bone found in the backyard of a farm in Queensland.

If correct, the theory turns current thinking about the evolution of birds on its head. Until now Australia was thought to have inherited a population of feathered travellers from elsewhere. But the new findings, reported in *New Scientist*, suggest that Australia was where songbird species first evolved.

The fossils were dated to 54.6 million years - nearly 25 million years older than the oldest previously known songbird fossils found in France. They come from the Tingamurra sediments, 160km north-west of Brisbane, a small area at the back of a farm which may have been the site of an ancient billabong, or pool.

As well as what is thought to be the world's oldest songbird, it has also produced Australia's oldest frog, bat, marsupial and salamander.

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# 280 miles up, power drains away

## Ten-day wait for vital spacewalk

Charles Arthur  
Science Editor

The three astronauts on board the *Mir* space station face an increasingly uncomfortable wait of at least 10 days before they can perform an emergency spacewalk to repair the damage caused by a collision with another spacecraft.

After a day without sleep, the three men have been told to dim the lights and stop exercising in order to reduce the power drain on the space station, which has lost more than one-third of its power following the crash on Tuesday morning as they were practising docking manoeuvres with an unmanned spacecraft, the *Progress*.

A Russian rocket with the necessary equipment to perform

forms one of its six modules back to Earth, Yuri Koptev, head of the Russian Space Agency, said that there is no question of doing so at present. Russia fears that without anybody aboard, the 100-tonne *Mir* might spiral out of control back towards Earth.

The Russian Space Agency acknowledged the gravity of the situation. "After the collision we estimated the critical situation on the *Mir* orbiting station at five on a seven-point scale," said deputy mission chief Sergei Krikalyov. "Now we must produce the necessary equipment for repairs."

Planning for the spacewalk will have already begun, with teams both in Russia's Space City and at NASA using virtual reality models of the spacecraft to plan the most efficient way to carry out the repairs. The power loss on board *Mir* has made it harder to decide what is necessary, because the crew has not been able to send back television pictures, and communications are limited to about 15 minutes during every orbit, each of which takes 45 minutes.

The virtual reality models of the space station were developed by a British company, VR Solutions of Salford. Its managing director, Bob Stone, was yesterday hopeful that the problems could be solved. He also suggested the accident could have been caused by the astronauts forgetting the simple mechanics of changing orbit.

**'It's not like *Star Wars* - things don't just go in a straight line when you turn on the thruster'**

the repairs, including patches for the hull and solar cell components, will be sent to *Mir*. But it will not take off before 4 July because of the time needed to gather the items and plan the details of the repair mission. The US space agency NASA said last night that a Shuttle mission blasting off this weekend cannot dock with *Mir*, and so could not offer help.

A committee of 72 Russian experts held a nine-hour meeting yesterday to plan the next stage of the recovery, which will require a spacewalk to fix a hole about the size of a stamp in the 11-year-old station, and the damage caused to one of its solar panels, which generate power for the craft. The *Spektr* has been sealed off from the rest of the space station.

Although the crew could abandon *Mir* if necessary, taking the *Soyuz* spacecraft which



board *Mir* was not glamorous. One visiting astronaut likened it to "living inside a giant vacuum cleaner", the pumps and vents required to keep moving fresh air around the station's modules create a constant din. But they are necessary, because there are no convection currents to keep it moving as on Earth.

Sleep is necessary but elusive; crew "lie" attached to the walls by bungee cords. But as the space station orbits the planet so quickly, darkness is replaced by light every 45 minutes. However, activities that we take for granted on Earth become immensely complex. The body insists that there should be an

"up" and "down", for orientation. "Everything floats up here," Dr Foale wrote to his one-year-old son by e-mail earlier this year. "I've reverted back to my childhood. I have had to learn how to clean myself, how to brush my teeth, how to eat without making a mess, and yes, even how to use a toilet."

## Mir's past crises raise US fears

Mary Dojevsky  
Washington

The accident that partially disabled the *Mir* space station has exposed increasing tensions between the US and Russia over what has until recently been one of the symbolic successes of the post-Cold War years: super-power co-operation in space.

Yesterday, a group of US congressmen, headed by the chairman of the Science Committee in the House of Representatives, James Sensenbrenner, called for a re-examination of the US-Russian space co-operation agreement and asked whether *Mir* was safe enough for American astronauts. Since February, he said, there had been no fewer than 10 "major crises" involving *Mir*. "We have to make a determination if the science we are doing up there is worth the American lives we are risking," he said.

He called for a "top to bottom" assessment of *Mir's* safety, including a personal guarantee from the US space administration, NASA, that the craft meets US safety standards, before any more Americans were sent there. A bill to this effect is at present before the Senate, but has not yet been considered.

The present US participant is the British-born Michael Foale. In Washington yesterday, his father, Colin, leapt to the defence of the *Mir* project, saying that he had "enormous admiration" for the Russian achievement with *Mir* and did not think the mission should be ended. "And I don't think [Michael] would want that either," he told a television interviewer.

Mike McCurry, a White House spokesman, also insisted that the US remained committed to the *Mir* programme.

Mr Sensenbrenner's call for a re-evaluation of US-Russian co-operation, however, was echoed by other politicians, some - but not all - die-hard opponents of US-Russian space co-operation from the start. A succession of US space experts, including a former US astronaut and participant in the *Mir* programme, indicated that the latest accident had widened - perhaps fatally -

an existing rift between the Americans and the Russians on co-operation in space.

They revealed that a fire on board *Mir* in February had been much more serious than was appreciated on Earth at the time, but pointed out at the same time that US and Russian interests might diverge. They noted, for instance, that *Mir* was equipped with an emergency craft to return the astronauts to Earth if necessary, but that it was a matter of "one out, all out", and the Russians would be likely to resist leaving the space station unless absolutely necessary.

They pointed out that conditions on *Mir* were such that leaving it unmanned, even for 24 hours, would mean in effect abandoning it. *Mir* requires constant maintenance that can

no longer be provided by remote control.

The Russians, they argued, would be understandably reluctant to write off an enterprise that had been a centrepiece of their space programme - and had also provided Russia with a strong bargaining counter when it negotiated its participation, on an equal basis with the US, in the International Space Station Project. *Mir* also earns the Russians significant amounts of hard currency at a time when their own space programme is severely short of funds.

Despite these funds, and the advances they receive for their agreed contribution to the International Space Station, the Russians are running eight months behind schedule on their parts of the project. This has disappointed and annoyed their US partners, who are sceptical that they will ever catch up.

on Saturday



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**BURLESQUE AT THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY**

**On the scent of the fake products...**



**...which devalue the real thing**

Glenda Cooper  
Consumer Affairs  
Correspondent

Trading standards officers are to launch a new national database to crack down on counterfeit goods, which are now estimated to be worth 8 per cent of world trade.

In Britain, alone last year £78m worth of fake goods were known to be in circulation and trading standards officers believe that this represents only 10 per cent of the actual trade.

The database has been tried out as part of a pilot project run by ten local authorities with the co-operation of the Federation Against Copyright Theft which combats video piracy and the Anti-Counterfeiting Group made up of companies such as Adidas, Ray-Ban and Marks & Spencer. Information on those dealing in counterfeit goods was shared between local authorities.

It is hoped the new action will help prosecutions by linking the enforcement activities and information databases of the 200-plus trading standards departments in Britain.

Firms are determined to crack down on fakes as they not only lose out on sales but their name can also be tarnished by being linked to products which are often highly inferior. The American designer and perfumier Calvin Klein recruited a

team of investigators to track down the suppliers of counterfeit scent and clothing which are flooding British markets after a recent raid in North Wales found 22,000 bottles of imitation CK Be - Calvin Klein's latest perfume - with a street value estimated at more than £750,000.

The most popular targets for counterfeiters remain clothing followed by audio cassettes, CDs, perfumes, computer software, video cassettes, watches and sunglasses. One con-man selling fake perfume in Oxford Street was found to be raking in £400 an hour.

Antonia Worsdall of the Anti-Counterfeiting Group said that packaging of fake perfume of-

ten looked very convincing and buyers would be given the real thing as a tester. But when they got home, the perfume had either been nothing more than water - in some cases pond water - and in one case it was said to be filled with urine.

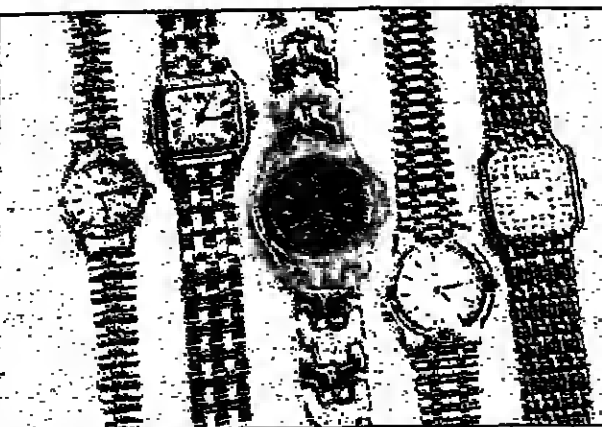
And some products are directly putting lives at risk - aircraft spares, car parts, and medical equipment are all falling victim to the fakers' craft. "We've found examples of motor parts - such as alloy wheels which if they go on cars virtually disintegrate," said Mike Parry, spokesman for the Institute of Trading Standards Administration. "You can imagine the effect of that if the car

is going at 70mph and the wheels crumble beneath you... If counterfeit parts are put into jet aircraft there is a very real risk to life and limb."

One of the growing areas of selling these goods is car boot sales - a recent survey by the Economic and Social Research Council found that every weekend one million people attend them. "Car boot sales are a means through which these products are sold and trading standards officers do carry out routine checks," said Mr Parry. "Some of the areas now have local registration schemes as well."

Reginald Dixon, director of FACT, said that pirate videos of films such as *The Last of the Mohicans* and *Men in Black* were already in circulation in Britain although the films were not even out in the cinema. A million pirated copies of the Disney smash *The Lion King* were known to be in circulation. "We estimate video piracy is worth £250m in the UK alone," he said. "It is a massive problem."

He said that pirates were often big business and that there had been well-established links to organised crime. "It has been proved counterfeiting funds organised crime, it funds drugs and child pornography. This is why people should think before buying counterfeit goods. They could be helping to fund a bomb or a bullet."



A database will track sales of such counterfeit goods as watches and (top) perfumes, which tarnish the name of the real (above)

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## news

# Fire-risk prison ship abandoned

Ian Burrell

The new £15m prison ship HMP Waver was floating empty of prisoners in Portland Harbour last night, less than two weeks after it took on its first inmates.

All 45 prisoners have been evacuated from the vessel, moored off the Dorset coast, and moved into more standard jail accommodation because the ship is a fire risk.

The episode represents a major embarrassment to the prison service, which gave the go-ahead to the floating jail despite concerns expressed by local fire chiefs.

The prisoners were moved out on Wednesday and spent a night in Verne prison at Portland before being transported yesterday to the Holesly Bay prison at Woodbridge in Suffolk.

The only people on board the prison last night were a team of contractors who were working to repair the vessel's fire safety sprinkler system which was found to be ineffective.

The signs had not been good when the first 21 prisoners were moved onto the *Waver* a fortnight ago, the first British prisoners to be

## Inmates moved ashore from £15m vessel

beld on a prison hulk since Victorian times.

Within hours they were evacuated as the fire alarms went off. No fire was found and prison officials insisted that the vessel was safe.

But Frances Crook, director of the Howard League for Penal Reform, said the *Waver* was an "accident waiting to happen". Now she has been proved right.

David Wilson, senior policy adviser to the Prison Reform Trust, said: "According to the fire service, a fire on ship is the most dangerous and difficult fire to have to fight. We have always queried whether or not there were adequate contingency plans in relation to safety issues and our fears seem to have been justified."

In prisoner jargon, a transfer is normally referred to as being "shipped out". In the case of the *Waver* inmates, they have been

"shipped in" for what could be a lengthy period of time ashore, although prison officials hope that they will be moved back onto the ship within days rather than weeks.

The vessel was bought in New York where it was awaiting sale for scrap for about £300,000.

It was towed across the Atlantic and more than £1m has been spent on converting a rusting barge, once used to house offshore workers, into a six-deck prison ship to house 400 low-risk inmates.

Cells are carpeted and have en suite showers, and there are sports facilities on board.

In April, fire chiefs expressed concerns about the thin walls between cells and the lack of emergency access to the ship.

A prison service spokeswoman said the sprinkler system had been found to be faulty after "accidental damage".

She said: "It was decided by Alan Walker, the director of operations (south), that it was in the interests of the safety of the staff and prisoners that they should be taken off the ship until the system was working properly again."



Stories through stitches: A woman standing in the Mughal Tent at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, which she and 800 other women from nine countries have helped to create. Fifty textile narrative panels will be shown by 14 September. Photograph: Tom Pilton

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## Trainee teachers learn basics

Judith Judd  
Education Editor

Ministers yesterday postponed for a year the previous Government's plans for a national curriculum for primary teacher training.

The curriculum will for the first time lay down what trainee teachers should be taught and how they should teach. Conservative proposals to insist on instruction in traditional teaching methods such as phonics, mental arithmetic and whole class teaching have been adopted with few changes. However, the Government will also require trainees to show how they will use a daily literacy hour.

Teacher trainers said they were already doing what ministers wanted and accused them of being more Conservative than the Conservatives.

Teacher training colleges

### One in three taught in classes of over 30

Rising class sizes were condemned yesterday by ministers as a "shocking indictment" of the last government. Official statistics show that in January, one in three primary school children - 1.3 million - were being taught in classes of more than 30. The figure is 85,000 more than the year before - which itself showed a similar rise - and officials said the trend looked set to continue. Stephen Byers, the schools standards minister, said the statistics showed the "legacy of inaction" facing education ministers. But it strengthened their resolve to cut class sizes, he added.

have been under attack from right-wingers for encouraging "trendy" teaching methods and for failing to show new teachers how to teach the basics. From September, trainees will need to satisfy new criteria before they qualify as teachers. For instance, they will have to demonstrate that they can maintain discipline and set and mark homework.

But the new primary cur-

riculum, which was to have been compulsory from this autumn, will now be introduced in September next year. Twelve colleges and universities have volunteered to pioneer it this autumn and the Government is inviting others to do so.

Estelle Morris, the school standards minister, said: "We are determined that new teachers know how to teach the three Rs effectively, how to

maintain discipline and how to use IT to benefit their teaching and their pupils."

Anthea Millett, chief executive of the Teacher Training Agency, insisted that the proposals would raise teaching standards. While in the past trainees had been taught what to do in theory, they would, for the first time, have to show they could put the principles into practice. To qualify, new teachers will have to show that they can teach whole classes, present lessons clearly, keep order, question pupils effectively, and set homework and targets for their pupils.

Nigel Gates of the Association of University and College Lecturers said: "This is rerun of the same movie produced by the previous government. We are not opposed to a national curriculum for teacher training but most teachers are already doing all these things."

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# Mad cow disease: Farmers welcome McDonald's decision as Government revises slaughter plans

## CJD families angry as British beef goes back into burgers

Ian Burrell

Relatives of victims of new variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease reacted with anger yesterday to claims by McDonald's, the fast-food chain, that British beef was safe.

The hamburger chain announced yesterday that it would end its 15-month ban on British beef after talks with Jack Cuatrecasas, the Agriculture Minister. McDonald's managing director Andrew Taylor said that the company would start buying the beef immediately and that it would appear in restaurants in the next few weeks.

But Clive Evers, chairman of the CJD Support Network, which gives help and support to the families of victims, said: "There are families who would be dismayed at a decision like this and who would have very deep personal concern. All the scientific and medical evidence seems to point towards BSE being the cause [of new variant CJD]."

He said 17 people had died from the disease, a rare form of dementia for which there is no cure. Early symptoms include unsteadiness and withdrawal from social contact. Death usually comes within a year of diagnosis.

Pat Mellowship, whose daughter Donna, 34, is dying from new variant CJD, called McDonald's actions "totally irresponsible". Donna, a mother of two, was diagnosed as having the disease last September and her family are convinced that she contracted it from eating hamburgers. Speaking at the family home in Tottenham, north London, yesterday, Ms Mellowship said: "How can they say it is safe? Cattle under 30 months are still getting BSE. If people were to see my Donna and the way she is, they would think differently. McDonald's and the Government are only interested in lining their own pockets."

**'How can they say it is safe? Cattle are still getting BSE'**

Mr Taylor said that McDonald's had lifted its ban in response to a renewed public confidence in British beef. "The results of our last research, conducted this month, show that 74 per cent of consumers now want us to sell British beef," he said.

Dr Cunningham welcomed the announcement, saying: "This is good news for farmers, the food industry and consumers. British beef goes through the strictest controls in the world and it most certainly can be eaten with confidence."

He added: "The sooner the European Union takes action towards lifting the export ban on British beef, the better it will be for beef farmers throughout the EU. I will continue to press the case in Europe to get this high quality British product back on international markets."



Matter of taste: A young customer tucking into a burger at McDonald's yesterday. Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

sponded to our customers' concerns and our actions reassured them that they could trust us to do the right thing."

McDonald's will continue to import beef from other European countries - the company buys beef from Ireland, the Netherlands and Italy - but supports the Government's calls for EU requirements to be standardised.

McDonald's, which by lifting the ban will save 10p-15p per pound of beef it uses, has 760 restaurants in the UK, selling £30m worth of beef every year. At the time it banned British beef, McDonald's was spending £25m a year on 7,000 cattle a week.

Welsh farmers welcomed McDonald's move and urged other fast food

chains, including Burger King, to follow its lead. Farmers' Union of Wales president Bob Parry said: "McDonald's decision means our industry can take a tremendous stride forward."

"We are delighted that our lengthy campaign to get McDonald's to put British beef back in the Big Mac has at last paid off."

# Ministers in U-turn over cattle cull policy

Michael Streeter

The Ministry of Agriculture has been instructing vets to slaughter the wrong cattle in the BSE cull and has now been forced to change its policy in a move which could cost the taxpayer millions of pounds.

Ministers have instructed officials to make a U-turn on the selective culling of animals at risk from BSE in an effective admission that disease-free cattle have been killed - while others potentially carrying it have survived.

These latest alterations have caused widespread dissatisfaction among many ministry vets, who are carrying the brunt of the changes, and will now have to review many herds they have already examined. Valuers will also need to revisit some farms.

The different approach in the culling, which was originally designed to help restore European confidence after the outbreak of BSE, was decided by the new team of ministers early in June. The information was circulated to ministry vets late last week, and to farmers over the weekend.

The extra costs will come from increased clerical and staff costs, payments to valuers and extra "ex-gratia" payments for disruption and loss of breeding stock to those farmers whose animals were killed unnecessarily. Some sources suggest the extra cost could be up to £3m, though the ministry yesterday stressed that it was far too soon to estimate.

Oce senior vet told *The Independent*: "There is a lot of confusion and in some places the reviewing of herds has been stopped while we sort out what's going on."

The new culling procedures, which only affect those herds with year-round calving, come

after the slaughter so far of around 6,500 animals.

Farmers are paid the value of the animal, the cost of nine-tenths of a replacement, plus a dislocation allowance.

Under the old procedures, those cattle selected for slaughter - a "cohort" - were chosen according to the calendar period in which they were born, the period running from 1 July to 30 June.

This meant that cattle thought to be at risk born in, say June, would be lumped together with those born up to 11 months beforehand, and who may have had different feeding and other experiences. But cattle born just a few weeks later in July might be excluded from the cull, even though they are close in age and experience to the "at-risk" animal.

In its written briefing to regional vets, the ministry accepts the earlier arrangement caused "anomalies" and a cohort will now consist of cattle born six months either side of the BSE case.

It adds: "We propose to write to all farmers who may be affected to advise them of the change in policy and of their right to make representations to us on their case where they feel they have been adversely affected by the change. If the animals have already been slaughtered an ex-gratia payment may be appropriate if it can be demonstrated that a financial loss was incurred as a result."

Ian Gardiner, director of policy for the National Farmers Union, welcomed the new policy as more sensible, and one they had previously urged, but regretted the route by which the decision was reached.

A ministry spokeswoman said: "We believe this system is fairer for farmers."

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therapies. Unfortunately, such a challenge comes at a time when the parents are at their most vulnerable and preoccupied with coming to terms with their own learning disabilities.

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For loan values £100 and over, interest is charged at 29.5% from the date of the agreement. Example based on 12 months Buy Now Pay Later. Cash Price £299.99. 20% deposit £59.99. Either pay the loan amount of £239.99 within 12 months or 36 monthly payments by direct debit of £16.74. Total amount payable £606.64.

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In the frame: Left, viewers standing in front of *With and Against the Times*, by Chris Thompson in the final-year postgraduates' exhibition at the Royal Academy Schools. Right, Thom Winterburn with part of one of his exhibits. Photographs: John Voos



## The art of tradition

Louise Jury

There will be no dead animals or close-up videos of bodily orifices in the final-year show for post-graduates at Britain's oldest surviving training school for artists when the exhibition opens today. But students at the Royal Academy Schools in Piccadilly, central London – known as a bastion of tradition – are more than happy to face comparison with their trendier rivals the Royal College of Art or Goldsmiths.

The harriers do appear to be breaking down. In September, the heart of the *avant garde* in the form of Charles Saatchi's collection of the best of young British artists is

coming to the main Royal Academy galleries as the highlight of the autumn season. But Max Moscrop, 34, winner of the country's most lucrative art prize, the £26,000 NatWest Award, said the Royal Academy was never that stuffy anyway. "There is a real breadth of work here and always has been," he said. Tradition runs strongly none the less. Yesterday Thom Winterburn, 27, was proudly surveying the make-up wounds in the gory photographs which form part of his final show, but he admitted the £5,000 Royal Society of Portrait Painters' Ondaatje Gold Medal that he won was as conventional as honours come. It leads to commissions, he said, "but you are painting dogs, wives and daughters".

## Straw sets up review of football tragedy

Patricia Wynn Davies  
Legal Affairs Editor

An examination of new evidence from the 1989 Hillsborough football stadium disaster will be set in train on Monday by Jack Straw, the Home Secretary.

The review, to be announced by Mr Straw in a Commons statement, is expected to be headed by a judge or QC who will study previously unseen video film footage and medical evidence which the families of those who died have submitted to the Home Office.

Members of the Hillsborough Family Support Group will meet Mr Straw beforehand to discuss the development. The treasurer of the group, Joan Traynor, whose sons Christopher, 26, and Kevin, 16, lost their lives in the tragedy, said: "All we want is the truth. It has never come out officially. We just want to know why our children died."

Phil Hammond, the group's secretary, whose son Phillip died, said: "We know they can't run the whole inquiry again but we would like them to look at the main points we have raised and whether we are right or wrong. Obviously we think we are right."

The fatal crush that led to the deaths of 96 fans came after police decided to relieve crowd pressure at the FA Cup semi-final match between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest in April 1989 by opening gates at the Sheffield Wednesday ground. Relatives who were at the match or watching television at home looked on in horror as the tragedy unfolded.

A 1990 inquest recorded verdicts of accidental death, but the late Lord Taylor of Gosforth's inquiry placed most of the blame with South Yorkshire police. Chief Superintendent David Duckenfield, the senior operational officer, was suspended and then retired on the

grounds of ill-health. The force has since been found negligent in a series of legal actions brought by victims' families and rank and file officers traumatised by the tragedy.

Calls for a new examination of the events were heightened with the screening of last December's docu-drama by the film-maker Jimmy McGovern, prompting fresh claims by victims' families of a cover-up.

The Crown Prosecution Service has studied video footage discovered in the archives of Yorkshire Television which South Yorkshire police previously said was of too poor quality to be made available to the Taylor inquiry or the inquest.

The families also believe that more could have been done to save the lives of those injured in the crush. A doctor who helped treat more than a dozen of the injured says that one teenager was still alive 25 minutes after the coroner decided that the victims must have been dead. Dr Stefan Popper, the Sheffield coroner, declined to hear evidence of what happened after 3.15pm on the day.

Anne Williams, the mother of one teenage victim, has gathered evidence that he was alive 45 minutes after the inquest claimed he was dead. She is preparing an appeal to John Morris, the Attorney-General.

Kevin did not die from traumatic asphyxia at 3.15 as claimed by the coroner," she said. "He died because of a neck injury. He needed a tracheotomy below the obstruction but the swelling of the bones closed his airway. That would have taken half to three-quarters of an hour to happen."

It is not possible to say at this stage where the review of evidence could eventually lead. But there are hopes that the original inquest verdict could be overturned and some families have suggested bringing private prosecutions of police officers.

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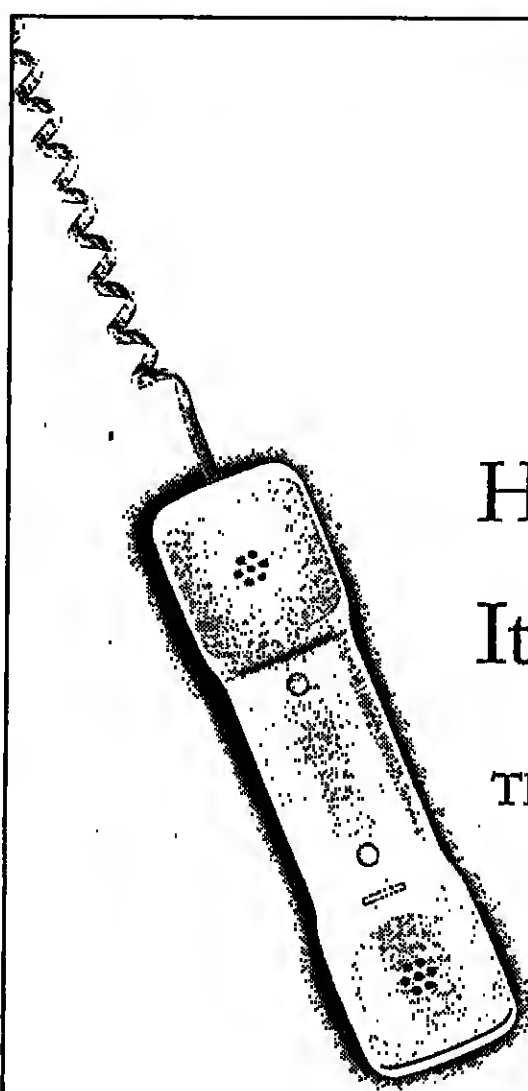
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## news

# Lottery watchdog wants more bite

Jojo Moyes

The director general of Oflot, the National Lottery regulator, said yesterday that he wanted "stronger regulatory teeth" with which to ensure lottery operator Camelot does not breach licence terms.

Peter Davis also said that he thought Camelot's reputation had "certainly suffered" over the awarding of huge bonuses to its directors, and he would be discussing the issue with them.

Speaking at the launch of Oflot's annual report for 1996/97, Mr Davis said Oflot had the ability, in extreme cases, either to rescind Camelot's lottery licence, which runs for seven years, or go to court in order to enforce its licence. But he wanted the ability to impose "substantial" financial penalties to deal with less serious licence infringements.

"I want to see stronger teeth... this has been on the table for

some time," he said. "I have raised it with the Secretary of State."

He cited the situation this year when Camelot had been unable to produce the required number of retail outlets for lottery tickets.

This "serious breach", he said, was exacerbated by the fact that information the organisation submitted to Oflot was incorrect. Oflot threatened to take Camelot to court, and the lottery operator corrected the problem.

"It was a situation where the imposition of a financial penalty would have been entirely appropriate," Mr Davis said.

He would not be drawn on the level of fines he wished to impose, but said they should be "substantial".

"The level of penalty that is necessary is one which will reflect the gravity of a licence breach but will also be meaningful to a substantial business

with a turnover of over £5bn per annum," he said.

Camelot's executives were recently heavily criticised for awarding themselves massive bonuses, despite a fall in ticket sales. Mr Davis refused to comment on how much Camelot's executives should be paid but said that if public disquiet about the matter were proven to affect sales he would intervene, as his remit was to ensure that the National Lottery is able to pay the maximum to good causes.

"If I felt that that was failing to meet statutory objectives then it would be right for me to talk to them about it," Mr Davis said. He agreed that Oflot was "the guardian of the image of the National Lottery" and said it would be under this guise that he would be talking to Camelot's directors about their pay.

"Camelot's reputation has certainly suffered from the handling of the directors remuneration issue," he said.

He would not respond to criticisms that he had not been "vigorous enough" in his dealings with Camelot, until the Government published its own response. "The only point I would make is that comparison between regulation of the lottery and regulation of some other industries, utilities for example, are extremely difficult," Mr Davis said.

During the period covered by the report last year, overall ticket sales, including both scratchcards and on-line sales, dropped £500m from £5.2bn to £4.7bn - with a loss of £143m to the good causes fund.

However, Mr Davis said the lottery was still way ahead of initial targets. The Oflot annual report states that for the duration of Camelot's licence the company will be donating 30 per cent of sales to good causes, 2 per cent more than estimated. He said in the year to March, £1.44bn was donated to good causes.

## Bow group pulls musical strings in the City



Neil Catchpole playing viola with the Gognagogs in *Gigagoin*, an extravaganza directed by Lucy Bailey at the Bridewell Theatre for the City of London Festival until 5 July. Photograph: Laurie Lewis

### DAILY POEM

#### packing

By Jean 'Binta' Breeze

i walkin out dis place  
nice an easy  
packin mi bag neat  
beatin a  
slow retreat  
doan have no  
property to protect  
no workers to neglect  
no politician fren  
no drugs man weh a go len  
mi a fortune

cyaan kill de battyman  
or sell out to foreign plan  
nor kiss no government ass  
jus waan get off de crass  
name decency  
so

i walkin out dis place  
nice an easy  
no qualms

This poem comes from Jean 'Binta' Breeze's third collection, *On the Edge of an Island* (Bloodaxe Books, £7.95), which includes prose as well as verse among its "stories... from somewhere behind God's back, as we would say in Jamaica". She reads her work on a cassette available from 57 Productions, *Riding on de Riddim*.

## Queen accepts Aitken's exit

Kim Sengupta

The disgraced former minister Jonathan Aitken's journey into political wilderness, following his humiliation in the High Court reached a new milestone yesterday, when the Queen accepted his resignation from the Privy Council.

The one-time Chief Secretary to the Treasury and Defence procurement minister, joined an inglorious list of three others who had either resigned or been struck off from the Privy Council this century.

A brief statement issued by Downing Street said: "The Queen has approved at his own request that the name of Jonathan William Patrick Aitken Esq be removed from the list of Privy Counsellors."

Mr Aitken had offered his resignation in a letter to the Cabinet Office after the collapse of his libel action against The

Guardian and Granada TV, the makers of *World in Action*. He is at present in hiding abroad.

He now faces a Scotland Yard investigation into allegations that he committed perjury and attempted to pervert the course of justice. Mr Aitken, his wife Lolita, and teenage daughter Victoria are expected to be interviewed under caution by detectives in the near future.

It is believed that Mr Aitken, who lost his Thanet South in the last election, had been persuaded by friends and senior members of the Conservative Party that he should resign and spare embarrassment to the Queen and the new Tory leader William Hague.

There are reports that Mr Aitken is at present in the US where he is preparing to write a book on his downfall. He has told friends that he intends to return to England in the next few weeks to face police questioning.

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# Surgeons call for halving of specialist hospitals

Jeremy Laurence  
Health Editor

Surgeons' leaders called yesterday for a programme of hospital closures and reorganisation to concentrate surgical expertise and minimise risks to patients.

The Senate of Surgery of Great Britain and Ireland, which represents the Royal Colleges of Surgeons and their specialist associations, said the number of hospitals providing advanced surgery should be halved to ensure that patients had access to a full range of specialists and the highest standard of care.

The move comes a day after Frank Dobson, the Secretary of State for Health, announced that hospitals would have to close and health and local authorities would have to work together to provide care closer to people's homes.

There is a growing consensus among ministers, doctors and National Health Service managers, that the NHS must adapt to survive, with specialist services concentrated in fewer hospitals while routine treatments are delivered by GP clinics and health centres. Yesterday, the Government invited applications for the first 20 pilot schemes for GP commissioning of local health services which are intended as an alternative to GP fundholding.

A report issued by the Senate of Surgery says surgical units in acute hospitals should serve populations of 500,000 people, about twice the present average. This is the minimum size necessary to allow all surgical specialties to be provided and to make the best use of expensive technology.

"In large cities ... this service

might all be provided on one site whilst in parts of the country with smaller or more diffuse populations, organisational arrangements could be made between the existing hospitals," the report says.

Charles Collins, consultant surgeon at Taunton and Somerset hospital and chief author of the report, said increasing specialisation in surgery and the expense of high-tech equipment meant small hospitals were no longer able to provide the same standard of care as larger ones.

Mr Collins said: "The problem for the small hospital is that they won't have enough surgeons to offer all the specialist skills ... Where there are two hospitals a few miles apart serving populations of 250,000 each we would recommend concentrating all emergency and acute services on one site, where all the facilities are."

In some cities - such as London, where the Royal London hospital has taken over the emergency work from St Bartholomew's and St Thomas's is to do the same for Guy's - change has already begun. Mr Collins added: "It might be ideal to halve the number of hospitals but we are alert to the political implications."

Earlier this month, the British Medical Association signalled for the first time that a limited programme of hospital closures could improve efficiency. A study commissioned by the BMA suggested that in a part of the country served by 10 NHS trusts all with accident and emergency departments, two might be closed and the number of A&E departments halved.



Edelman's fuchsia silk cocktail number; £19,300

Going, going, gone... Diana's dresses raise £3.5m



Worn as Charles admitted adultery on TV; £39,200



A royal price: Lord Hindlip, Christie's international chairman, receiving the final bid - £120,301 - for the 'Travolta dress' Photograph: Ron Fiehr/AP

Christa Worthington  
New York

There was not a drag queen in sight as more than 1,000 people jammed Christie's Park Avenue salerooms at the auction of Diana, Princess of Wales's wardrobe of 79 dresses and ball gowns worn primarily on state occasions from 1981 to 1996.

Instead, ladies from deepest Georgia and Tennessee, dripping drawls and golly-gosh enthusiasms, came for a piece of Diana, their Judith Krantz heroine come to life.

The Princess, back in England at the time of the sale, successfully emerged from this divestiture of royal relics as the protagonist of a new drama: that of patron saint of the very good cause.

In all, the sale of Diana's cast offs raised \$5.7m (£3.5m) to fight Aids and breast cancer, a record for a charity event says Lord "Charlie" Hindlip, Christie's international chairman and the evening's auctioneer. Almost £2m came from the dresses. Another £1.1m was earned by the sale of coffee-table catalogues and additional monies were raised by fund-raisers in New York and London.

As anticipated by Christie's, the sale drew a new kind of buyer, often a novice bidder enticed by the catalogue and the lack of a reserve bid. The bridal designer Par Kerr, of Memphis, Tennessee, bought four dresses to add to her collection of 10,000 pieces of royal memo-

## Material girl's garments - a cut above the rest and with a price to match

No 1 (£120,301): Ink-blue silk velvet gown by Victor Edelstein in which Diana danced with John Travolta at the White House during a state banquet given by President Ronald Reagan in 1985.  
No 2 (£31,203): Catherine Walker's strapless evening dress and jacket with high collar, in white crepe silk, which Diana wore for the 1989 British Fashion Awards in London.  
No 3 (£48,120): Again by Edelstein, an embroidered dinner dress and bolero in oyster duchesse satin, featured on the cover of the auction catalogue.  
No 4 (£45,113): A white silk-style silk chiffon gown by Gina Fratini for Hartnell.  
No 5 (£40,902): Walker's short, draped cocktail dress in grey silk, which Diana wore to the Serpentine Gallery, London.  
No 6 (£39,699): By Hachi, a long, embroidered dinner dress in cream silk chiffon, which Diana wore on several occasions, including an official visit to Japan.

No 7 (£28,060): Christina Stambolian's off-the-peg black cocktail dress which Diana wore at the Serpentine the night her estranged husband, interviewed on prime-time television, admitted adultery.  
Joint No 8 (£37,293): A halter-necked evening dress in midnight-blue silk crepe, by Edelstein, and Walker's pale-blue chiffon evening dress, worn by Diana at the 1987 Cannes Film Festival, and to the London opening of Miss Saigon in 1989.  
No 10 (£34,887): Walker's midnight-blue and white satin cocktail dress, which Diana wore during an official visit to Japan in 1986.

Walker had 50 dresses in the sale and Edelstein 10. Fratini, Hachi and Stambolian scored hits with their only entries in the auction.



Frock parade: Diana in the most costly dress, with John Travolta

abilia dating from 1700. Wearing T-shirts and tuxes and looking unlike most audiences who come to this elite saleroom, the crowd featured a self-described "Diana fanatic" with Diana dolls strung from his shoulders, and a collector of celebrity memorabilia eager to add to his stash of shirts worn by Elvis and Donna Reed's earrings from *It's a Wonderful Life*.

No doubt out of deference to the Princess of Wales, the newly casual and modern magazine cover girl, the editors of *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* were in attendance. The takings will benefit the

Aids Crisis Trust and the Royal Marsden Hospital Cancer Fund in Britain and the Aids Care Centre at New York Hospital, the Harvard Aids Institute and the Evelyn H. Lauder Breast Center and Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in the United States.

While pre-sale hype had projected earnings of \$7m (£4.2m), Lord Hindlip admitted: "\$1.6m would have been my guess. We're thrilled. I was a little frightened that the sale had been talked up too much."

Sale prices dropped and then rose dramatically at the sale's end with the record amount ever earned by a costume: £120,301 for the "John Travolta dress", an ink-blue velvet gown by Victor Edelstein in which the Princess danced with the film star at the Reagan White House in 1985. The bidder was an anonymous American. The lowest bid was £13,143 for a Walker tunic dress.

"These are the holy relics of the great Cinderella story of our time," remarked Richard Martin, curator of the Costume Institute at the Metropolitan Museum in New York.

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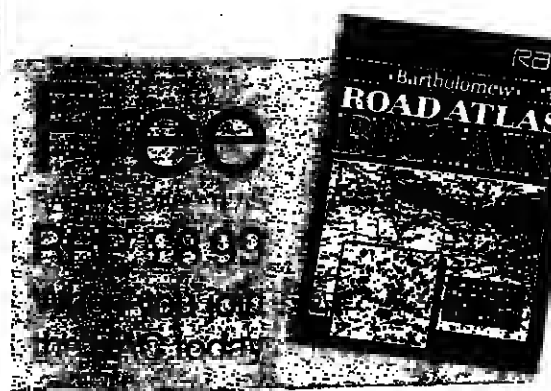
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Sir Cameron Mackintosh: Will be creating a new show

Christian Wolmar  
Westminster Correspondent

# Millennium project benefits from the spin of experience

The Millennium Exhibition yesterday got a new name, an increased budget and its own public holiday on 31 December 1999. But uncertainty still surrounds several aspects of the project including whether the dome at Greenwich in south-east London will be permanent. The end of the year 1999 show has now been renamed the Millennium Experience to get away from the idea that it will be a boring business exhibition. Peter Mandelson, Minister Without Portfolio, who is now in charge of the project, also confirmed that the budget of the project was now £750m, plus an extra £50m that may be called upon before it opens in December 1999.

Mr Mandelson also announced that Mark McCormack, of IMG Associates, the sports sponsorship company, would be employed on a commission basis. In fact, this was reported by *The Independent* in February, which said that it was likely to cost £15m to raise the £150m that the project needs. No contract has been signed with Mr McCormack.

While the Cabinet approved the project at its meeting yesterday, it is still unclear whether the five criteria which Tony Blair said would determine the future of the project have been met. The option of a national programme has been met with £76m of the Experience's budget being earmarked for projects outside London. On management, the Government announced that former Channel 4 boss Michael Grade; Ruth Mackenzie, the

newly appointed director of Scottish Opera, and Sir Alan Cockshaw, chairman of Amec Construction, would be appointed to the board of the organisers, now called the New Millennium Experience Company.

However, the promise of no money from the public purse has been fudged. Chris Smith, Secretary of State for National Heritage, confirmed that the project will be receiving £400m of lottery funding, plus an extra £50m if cash is needed before the opening. However, while ministers hope it will be within budget, there cannot be any guarantee that such a big project will not cost a lot more.

Ticket sales would bring in £135m from up to 12 million visitors, which Bob Ayling, the BA chief executive who is also chairman of the company organising it,

compared with the Munich Beer festival, which attracts 6 million people in two weeks, and the Hanover trade exhibition which is expected to attract 40 million.

The decision on the future of the site is to be reviewed. The future of the dome is still uncertain. Mr Mandelson said that Greenwich would be home to a "new national digital network for education and learning" which will promote the "university for industry", being set up for workers to study for degrees, and the "national grid for learning" which will bring the Internet into schools.

Mr Mandelson confirmed that Sir Cameron Mackintosh, producer of *Les Misérables*, would be creating a show - "an arrow through time" - in the 10,000-seater drum arena, and he said the Experience would be "unmissable".

## Bertie Ahern elected as new Irish premier

Alan Murdoch  
Dublin

Bertie Ahern was last night elected Taoiseach with a slim majority in the Dail backed by a centre-right coalition of his Fianna Fail party and its Progressive Democrat ally and three independents.

Mr Ahern achieved just enough support to avoid de-

pendence on the vote of Sinn Féin's sole TD (MP), Caoimhín Ó Caoláin, but the narrow majority guarantees a nervous term of office. He received 85 votes from the 166-seat chamber with 78 against. Outgoing premier John Bruton received 75 votes.

Mr Ahern's achievement is belated compensation for the disappointment of 1994 when,

just as he was due to step into Albert Reynolds' shoes after the latter's coalition collapsed, a sudden U-turn by Labour partners put him back in opposition.

An affable consensus politician, Mr Ahern, 45, has played a key role in Ireland's economic boom, helping to corral trade unions into a decade of voluntary wage restraint. Previously labour and then finance

minister, he broke down old prejudices before divorce was approved by publicly confirming his own marriage failure.

On Northern Ireland, Mr Ahern argued strongly up until last week's Lurgan murders for lines to be kept open to Sinn Féin, and, despite widespread pessimism in Dublin about IRA intentions, could be influential in pressing for a ceasefire.

The new deputy-premier will be Mary Harney, leader of the small centre-right Progressive Democrats, while Raphael "Ray" Burke, 53, inherits Dick Spring's foreign affairs and Northern Ireland role. His selection above deputy FF leader Mary O'Rourke, reflects his closer ties to Mr Ahern, who will himself be directly involved in Northern policy.



Power play: Geoffrey Clements, of the Natural Law Party, which wants to provide a flying squad to help politicians reach a higher consciousness. Photograph: Andrew Buaman

Fran Abrams  
Political Correspondent

William Hague needed this like he needed a hole in his transcendental consciousness. Just as the Conservative Party leader was starting to work up some gravitas, it was revealed yesterday that up to 3,000 yogic flyers have formed an airborne back-up squad for him.

Something akin to formation flying takes place each month during special monthly "coherence days", and Mr Hague, who is a regular practitioner of transcendental meditation, is to be among their chief beneficiaries.

The Tory leader has already gained maturity, confidence, energy and a rare ability to survive on just a few hours sleep from his ability to tap into "the silent reservoir of creativity at the base of his thinking process", according to the Natural Law Party.

With the help of his own political flying squad he and his fellow politicians can now reach an even higher level of consciousness.

Yogic flyers around the country who get together on a regular basis to practise their art and to create a special energy are offering up their powers to Mr Hague for the good of the Tory party and for politics in general. Already they have cut crime and

## Yogic flyers offer to take Hague on a higher plane

brought numerous other benefits to Britain, they say, but in future a new sense of harmony could pervade the land.

The followers of the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi have been in touch with Mr Hague since he invited them to speak at an Oxford Union debate during his spell as president. In fact, it seems that even the famous conference speech he delivered under the approving eye of Margaret Thatcher in 1977 may have been delivered while under the influence of "TM". The young Hague took up the pursuit at the tender age of 16.

Dr Geoffrey Clements, leader of the Natural Law Party, is in no doubt about the cause of young William's success. "He has built up his personality on the basis of natural law. From the age of 16 he has given importance to unfolding his inner potential. We wish him all success in elevating the performance of

British politics and government to bring fulfilment to the nation and integration and peace in the world."

But although Mr Hague is clearly the Maharishi's man in British politics, natural law is a generous thing. Even Tony Blair's new Labour can benefit too, because its principles will lead to conflict-free politics for all.

The generosity of the NLP knows no bounds. For just a small fee, the Government could reap extra rewards from its special flying days. "Our intention will be to build them up and to offer to the Government that they could sponsor that programme for the benefit of national life," Dr Clements said.

If Mr Hague fears all this levity will detract from his image as a well-grounded politician, he is hiding his worries well. He is apparently happy to talk about the joys of meditation endlessly, if prompted.

## Scots Tories in row over £2m cash fund

Stephen Goodwin

The bitter faction fighting be-deviling the Scottish Tory party erupted again last night following a claim that the German Christian Democrats were funding a group of left-wing Tories planning a takeover.

William Hague will today walk into this row and to try and persuade the disgruntled remnants of the Tory party in Scotland not to split from their English comrades, to continue the fight against devolution. King Canute may have set himself an easier task.

Arthur Bell, chairman of the Scottish Tory Reform Group, vehemently denied the suggestion of a £2m fund, insisting that the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, an arm of the CDU, had merely provided money for a research visit to Germany.

"We are moving towards a federal system in Britain and we have to look at Conservatives elsewhere in Europe and see how they remain united while being more responsive to the public," David McLetchie, president of the voluntary wing of the party,

accused Mr Bell of "playing dangerous nationalist games" and the right-wing Lloyd Beat demanded disciplinary action against his old adversary.

The row stoked the mood of recrimination among Scots Tories, with Mr Beat finger-pointing at the rumours of gay liaisons which led to the resignation of Sir Michael Hirst on the eve of the election.

Mr Hague says his primary reason for attending the conference of Scottish Tories in Perth is "to listen". Michael Ancram, the party's devolution spokesman, says he will be listening too. But so far neither has given the slightest encouragement to those urging "reform or die" on the stricken tartan Tories.

There was incredulity earlier this week when Mr Ancram repeated John Major's general election claim that devolution would lead to the break-up of the United Kingdom.

"What on earth is he playing at?" was the stunned reaction of one senior Tory who wondered if Mr Ancram, from his Devices seat, had actually noticed the

election result in Scotland. "The people have spoken. We have no MPs left here. Doesn't that tell them anything?"

Mr Hague is expected to sound more emollient when he addresses the conference this evening - underlining his personal support for a "no" vote in September's referendum while leaving dissident members free to argue a contrary case, as in 1979.

The new leader will be applauded warmly, but would be unwise to lecture the battered band. Scottish Tories are worried enough about their image as a puppet of an unsympathetic English parish. As much time will be spent agonising over this with London as over devolution.

Michael Rifkind, the former foreign secretary, has urged a thorough-going reform with identity - possibly with a new Association. Nor does he share Mr Ancram's vision of devolution spelling the end of the UK.

Annabel Goldie, chairman of the Tories in Scotland, said "nothing is off limits" in the review of party structure.

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# Clinton is sent warning over enlarged Nato

Mary Dejevsky  
Washington

A 50-strong group of America's "great and good", including a posse of former ambassadors, arms control negotiators and foreign affairs experts, issued an open letter to President Bill Clinton yesterday setting out strong objections to the enlargement of Nato and calling for the continuation of less formalised relations instead.

Signatories to yesterday's open letter come from both ends of the political spectrum. They include former US arms negotiators, Paul Warnke and Paul Nitze; Michael Mandelbaum, a former foreign affairs adviser to President Clinton; Jack Matlock, who was ambassador in Moscow during the collapse of communism and several other former ambassadors with experience of the region.

The letter was co-ordinated by Susan Eisenhower, granddaughter of the former US president, Dwight Eisenhower, and a leading foreign affairs analyst in her own right.

The letter, published 10 days before the Nato summit meeting in Madrid, where the new members are expected to be approved, is the latest and strongest indication of a gathering head of steam in the United States against expansion of the alliance.

Not mincing its language, the letter describes Nato enlargement as a "policy error of historic proportions" that would "decrease allied security and unsettle European stability". The arguments relate to Russia, to the aspiring Nato members, to the alliance and to the US.

With Russia, it argues that expansion will strengthen conservatives - who will see Russia's security threatened - and prevent ratification of outstanding arms control treaties, including Start II. In Europe, it says that enlargement - whether with Poland, Hungary and the Czech



Susan Eisenhower: Helped co-ordinate the open letter

Republic, as the US Administration favours, or with the addition of Romania and Slovenia, as some European countries favour - will establish a new division in Europe between those who are in and those who are out.

Of the alliance, the letter argues that its military effectiveness will be diluted, and commit Nato to defending countries whose democracy and ethnic relations are not yet settled. And as far as the US is concerned, the signatories argue that the European Nato members, old and new, will expect the US to pick up the bill, a bill which will be perhaps five times more than the \$25bn (£15bn) State Department estimate.

Unusually for an initiative that originates in the charmed circles of the Washington elite, the arguments advanced in the letter reflect a large and growing segment of American opinion outside Washington. Less sophisticated as the arguments of Washington insiders, the view from the "heartland" concentrates on the likely cost to American taxpayers of equipping central European countries for Nato membership and the basic principle of whether American soldiers should be expected, as it is said, "to die for Danzig".

Business concerns, on the other hand, stand by the administration's support for expansion, partly because of the

weapons orders they expect to gain when Central Europe has to make its weapons systems compatible with those of Nato.

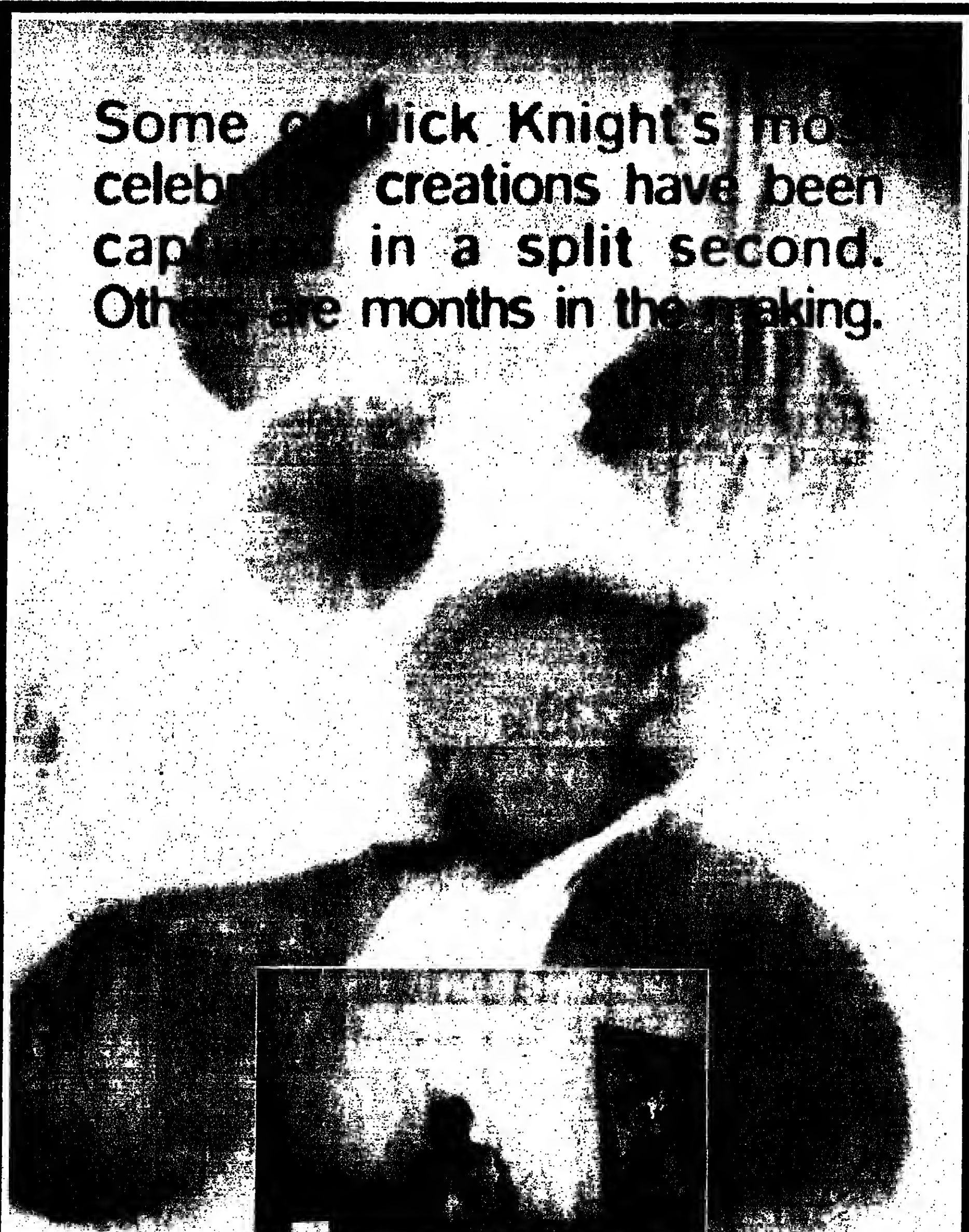
Despite this support, yesterday's letter provides a salutary warning to the administration of the opposition Nato expansion is likely to face when it comes before the US Senate for ratification. Mr Clinton's special adviser on Nato enlargement, Jeremy Rosner, already concedes that the necessary two-thirds majority will not be easy to obtain.

Even prominent supporters of enlargement, such as Democrat Senator, Joe Biden, cautions that younger senators do not have the emotional attachment to Europe of their elders.



Defensive position: Nato's retiring Allied Supreme Commander of Europe, General George Joulwan (left), waving goodbye to the Secretary-General, Dr Javier Solana, of Spain, after receiving a Nato medal at a farewell ceremony at the defence alliance's headquarters yesterday. Photograph: AFP

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## Internet ban outlawed by top US court

Key decisions also given on mercy killings and president's powers

Mary Dejevsky

The US Supreme Court handed down three decisions yesterday, each of which will have a direct impact on aspects of life in America, and could in two of the cases set precedents for how other countries tackle similar questions.

It ruled against censorship of the Internet and for the right of individual states to ban doctor-administered euthanasia ("assisted suicide"). It also enhanced the power of the president by giving him the long-sought right to veto sections of Bills he dislikes rather than the whole Bill.

The least conditional of the rulings was that Congress had acted unconstitutionally when it legislated last year to censor the Internet. The decision, the first sorted by the top judicial authority into cyberspace, said that in trying to protect children, Congress had violated the constitutional right of adults to free speech, and it struck out that section of the legislation on "decency" in communications.

On assisted suicide, the court upheld laws in New York and Washington state that make it a crime for a doctor to end the life of a terminally ill patient, even if the patient is judged mentally capable of making the decision. It ruled that assisted suicide was different from allowing a patient to refuse treatment for a terminal illness, a right recognised as constitutional in 1990. The "right to as-

sistance in committing suicide," it ruled, "is not a fundamental liberty interest".

Observers said the ruling was unlikely to be the last word, as it left states free to pass their own legislation. Oregon has already passed such a decision by referendum, but that is facing its own legal challenge.

Constitutionally, the most important judgment is the new right granted the president, because it alters the balance of power between the president (the executive) and Congress (the legislature).

Until now, the president has had to decide whether the merits of the Bill before him outweigh what he does not like or not.

The veto was all or nothing; it could not be discriminatory. Supporters of what has become known as the "line-item veto" argued that it would considerably speed up legislation because it effectively limits the ability of Congress to make one item in a Bill conditional on another.

The most recent example of such congressional "blackmail" was two weeks ago, when the Republican majority tried to link federal assistance for flood victims to a project of its own. The result was that President Bill Clinton vetoed a Bill that he otherwise supported wholeheartedly.

Eventually, a combination of furious public opinion and divisions among Republicans led to the removal of the offending section, and Mr Clinton signed the measure.

It will in future be much more difficult for Congress to employ such tactics and means a president like Mr Clinton, whose own party does not control the House of Representatives or the Senate, will be much less hamstrung in what he can do.

The court did, however, hold open the right of elected representatives to challenge the ruling if they felt their rights had been adversely affected by a specific presidential decision.

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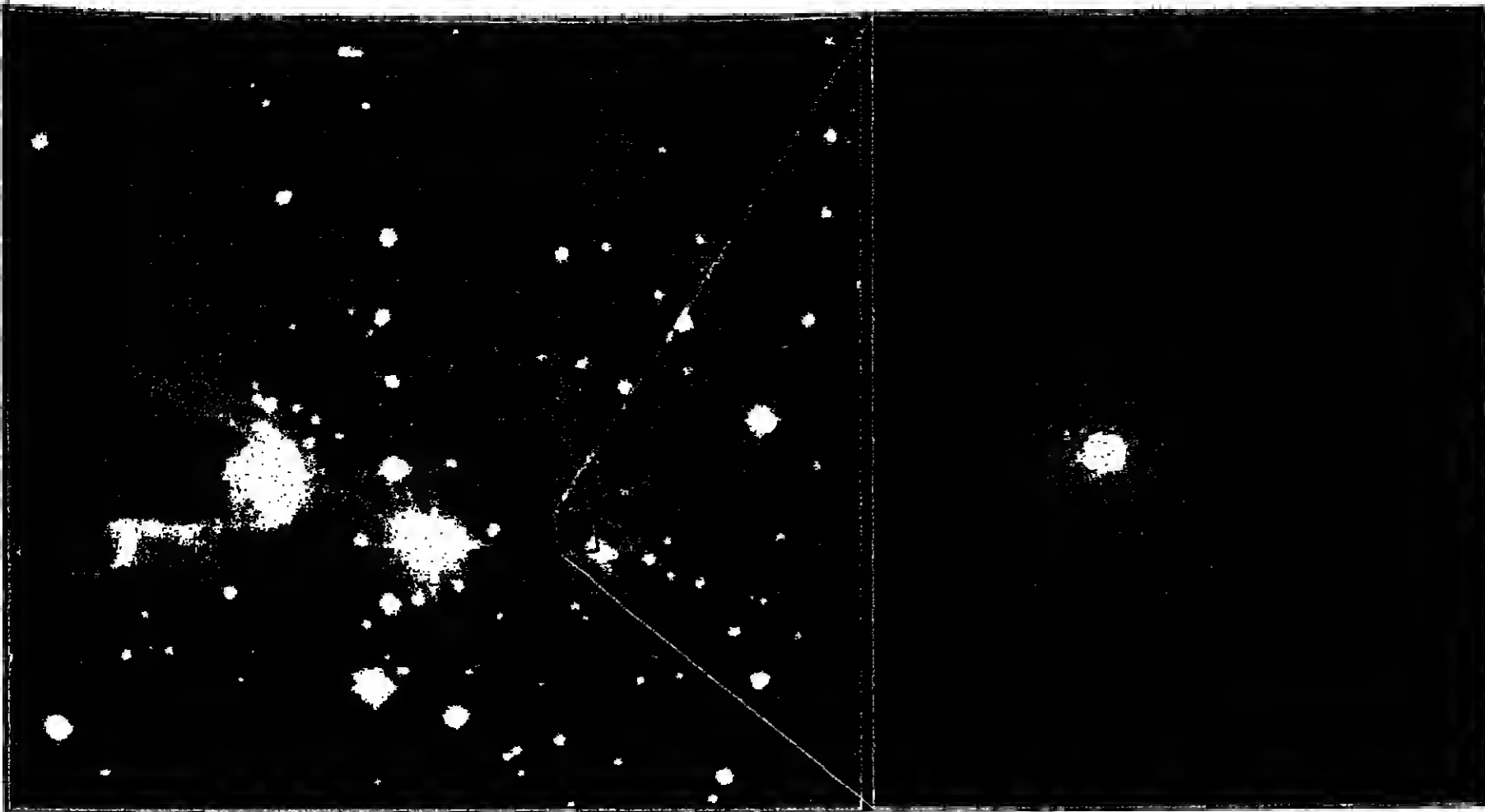
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A in the stars: Cone Nebula (left), 2,500 light years from Earth, and the main star NGC 2264 IRS made visible with infrared imaging. Photographs: University of Arizona/Nasa

## Six new stars are born amid gas and dust

Charles Arthur  
Science Editor

The right-hand frame here contains not one star, but seven - though the dimmer six are all the offspring of the larger, central one. New pictures from the Hubble space telescope, using its infrared camera, have provided scientists with direct evidence that huge stars can throw off enough dust and gas to create "baby" stars, visible here as the six fainter dots in the picture.

The right-hand frame is an enlargement of a tiny area of the left, which lies in the Cone Nebula, 2,500 light years away from Earth in the constellation Monoceros.

The main star itself is called NGC 2264 IRS, though it cannot be seen in the left-hand picture because of obscuring dust in its path. But with infrared imaging,

the central star is more apparent. Scientists call the starbirth visible here "triggered" star formation, and happens when a gale of high-speed particles from a young, massive star compresses nearby dust and gas until it becomes dense enough to trigger the formation of a star, or stars. Usually stars form by the gradual collection of dust and gas due to gravity, until the combined mass sparks fusion in its core. Normally, individual stars would be many light years away: the nearest to Earth is almost five light years distant. However, these "offspring" stars are just 0.04 to 0.08 light years from the central mother. The pictures were analysed by astronomers at the University of Arizona and Nasa. The rings around the star are not part of the image, but caused by diffraction effects from the point-like sources of light.

## Vaccines tested on Australian orphans



Babies pigs: Hundreds of orphans in the State of Victoria were used in medical trials. Photograph: Reuters

Robert Mankin  
Sydney

Outcry erupted in Australia yesterday over revelations that hundreds of orphan babies and children were used as guinea pigs in experiments on vaccines for measles, whooping cough, influenza and other diseases for 25 years after the Second World War.

Former wards of state demanded a judicial inquiry after it was disclosed that some of the tests did not work, failed to pass safety tests in animals and caused vomiting, abscesses and other side-effects in babies.

The revelations came in a report in the Age newspaper of Melbourne, which outlined seven separate cases of such experiments taking place in orphanages in Victoria state between 1945 and 1970. The experiments were conducted under the auspices of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research, one of Australia's most prestigious research institutions, and the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories, then a federal government body.

They took place without the consent of any of the children's parents at a time when orphanages were crowded with state wards under an official policy that children from poor families and single parents should be placed under the care of the state. Such policies continued until the 1970s.

Michael Wooldridge, the federal minister for health, said last night that the experiments would never have happened. He said they were conducted according to the medical ethics of the day and should not be judged by today's standards. We will do everything we can

to put people's minds at rest."

According to the Age, researchers from the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute began work to develop a vaccine against herpes simplex by conducting experiments on babies in 1947 at Broadmeadows Babies Home, an institution run by the Roman Catholic Sisters of St Joseph. They chose the state wards because the infectious virus thrived in cramped living conditions and was believed to be "predominantly a disease of the poorer classes". The experiments failed. Some of the vaccinated babies caught herpes.

In another experiment, researchers from the Commonwealth Serum Laboratory tested combined antigens for whooping cough, diphtheria and tetanus on wards aged between three months and almost three years, from three Melbourne babies' homes.

A separate experiment by the same institution, involving 350 babies, was conducted over three years up to 1970. In this trial, to reduce the side-effects of influenza vaccines in infants, the babies were given full adult doses of the test vaccine.

David Vaux, the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute's spokesman, said yesterday that medical ethics committees with strict rules for informed consent on such trials had not been "invented" at the time.

"There were epidemics at the time of infectious diseases killing large numbers of children, especially at these institutions where conditions were very crowded. The sisters-in-charge were desperate to try to prevent their children from dying." Why the experiments on a non-life threatening condition such as herpes? "The authorities were interested in preventing children from suffering from herpes," Dr Vaux said.

Former wards who believe they might have been used as guinea pigs are demanding access to their medical records. Heather Bell, a Melbourne woman used in one trial as a baby, and now a spokesperson for a group representing former wards of state, said yesterday: "We want a government inquiry. The government were totally responsible for these children and they used them as guinea pigs. Would you use your children for medical experiments?"

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"The usual comparison is that more bombs were dropped

Between raids, which saw B52 bombing sorties every eight minutes for nearly 10 years, a clandestine "secret army" of US servicemen, aided by minority ethnic Hmông tribesmen, attempted unsuccessfully to sever supply routes between Vietnam and Laos, which

significa





# n Laos

US raids  
bombs  
main

amongst the world's true victims of war, the people of Laos have suffered the most. Since the start of the Vietnam war, Laos has been a battleground for the superpowers. The US has dropped thousands of bombs on the country, and the North Vietnamese have used it as a base for their operations. The people of Laos are now suffering from the aftermath of the war, with many villages destroyed and people displaced. The US has now announced that it will be withdrawing its troops from Laos, but the damage has already been done.

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We assure you that we will continue to listen and respond to your concerns. And we'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for your valued support over the last few months.

*Andrew Taylor*

Andrew Taylor, Managing Director of McDonald's Restaurants Ltd.

For further information contact McDonald's UK Customer Services Department 0990 244 622.





## international

# Confusion and chaos among the colonels of Sierra Leone's new junta



Soldiers of the Revolutionary United Front, part of the disorganised forces that linked up to run Sierra Leone after the army coup earlier this month, ride around Freetown in a pick-up truck. Phones at army headquarters do not work and the military's greatest influence so far is the constant reruns of kung fu films on television

Photograph: Enric Marti

Michael Ashworth  
Freetown

At the military headquarters of Johnny Paul Koromah's military junta in Sierra Leone, the driving is bad. A commandeered UN Land-Rover kangaroos up the main drive while a new but

battered Mercedes, full of soldiers with rocket-propelled grenades and AK47s sticking out of the window, screeches around the corner. It narrowly misses a group of men before the driver loses control and ploughs into a concrete pillar which disintegrates. The driver jumps out and

kicks the car and the passengers jump out and kick the driver. The grounds of the base are like a human chicken-coop. Groups of soldiers and members of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) militia wander around aimlessly. The army launched a coup

last month to overthrow the government, and then joined up with the RUF, once its bitter enemy. The result, so far, is not very tidy. Inside the building the chaos is just as ubiquitous as outside. At the entrance to the office of the Director of Defence Infor-

mation, a man with a machine-gun wearing a cowboy hat and a pair of sunglasses stands guard. Beneath the bandoleer of linked ammunition around his neck, the logo of his T-shirt reads: "Save the Planet".

Inside the office Lieutenant Eldred Collins - the spokesman for the rebel movement, invited by the army to join the new regime - is attempting to justify the recent coup. "We are a people's government. We are a government for the people by the people. We have peace in Sierra Leone because J P Koromah brought the RUF from the bush. It must have been divine intervention, what else could it have been?"

Colonel Cessay, the Director of Defence Information who now shares his office with Lt Collins, leans back on his chair and stares at the ceiling. He will not say it out loud but it is written all over his face: he thinks his RUF counterpart is an idiot. The colonel politely excuses himself saying he has to report to his superior, a major.

The rank structure in the new People's Army is complicated. Colonels like Cessay have to answer to junior officers; and "Honourable" Sergeants (those on the Army Council) are higher up the ladder than some officers. Where the RUF commanders fit into the rank structure is anybody's guess, given that the vice-chairman of the Ruling Council and leader of the RUF is a corporal.

Apart from harassment on the streets, the flurry of chaos in the barracks has little impact on the outside. This is partly because the country has all but ground to a halt; but mostly because the phones in the barracks don't work.

The inhabitants of Freetown have few illusions about their situation. "What do you expect? When they looted my house they ran off with my computer thinking it was a television set, and these are the same people who are trying to run a country," says Sule Hassan, a local businessman whose house and factory were destroyed by looters.

Despite intimidation, Freetown newspapers continue to attack the junta for incompetence and illegality. "The AFRC [Armed Forces Revolutionary Council] must resign, they have left our nation stranded internationally and our people looted and displaced," states the editorial of the Freetown newspaper, the *Standard Times*. The greatest influence the military has had so far is the constant reruns of kung fu and *Rambo* films on Sierra Leonean television. Although there are no overt

street demonstrations, Sierra Leonians are expressing their disgust for the present regime by staying away from work or fleeing the city. The secretary general of the Labour Congress, Gandebe Yillah, continues to defy government demands for a return to work stating: "We will only return to work when we have democratically elected government in Sierra Leone." For many, a return to work is impossible as businesses have closed down and factories have been destroyed.

The atmosphere in Freetown is subdued. Sierra Leonians want to see the back of the present regime, but they are fearful of the possibility of a Nigerian-led invasion by the Ecomog regional military force. "We don't want this regime but we don't want the Nigerians to intervene. They will cause damage and make the problem worse," says Samuel Foday, an economics student at Freetown University.

At present, Nigerian troops are camped out across the peninsula at the international airport at Lungi and their gunships straddle the harbour. They have so far failed to inspire



Koromah: Running a country that has ground to a halt

the inhabitants of Freetown that they have the competence and discipline to mount a successful military operation.

In their initial abortive attempt to oust the junta on 2 June - one week after the coup - chaotic logistics and poor planning led to Nigerian artillery batteries shelling their own troops and the soldiers running out of ammunition. Those who were not killed or captured beat a hasty retreat to their base at Lungi.

Many Sierra Leonians are only too well aware of the Nigerian reputation in Liberia, where the Ecomog peace-keeping force participated in the looting and destruction of Monrovia and earned the nickname "Every Car Or Moving Object Gone". The last thing the inhabitants of Freetown want is another excuse for a looting spree.

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# Labour faces a tough exam in economics



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Repeat after me. Back to basics. The three Rs. Whole-class teaching. Put your calculators away, you at the back. After three years in rehearsal, David Blunkett is now fluent in the language of educational traditionalism.

And the Government's first two months have seen an impressive rhetorical display. Within days of winning the election, Mr Blunkett had "named and shamed" 18 failing schools and sent in hit squads (quickly renamed "help squads" for the squeamish end of the market). He ordered junk food off school menus, questioned whether under-eights should have calculators, and announced a crackdown on "trendy" teacher-training colleges.

But what of the substance? Yesterday, the Government announced some of the details of its teacher-training reforms. For a fuller judgement of the transition from saying to doing, we must wait for next month's White Paper on education standards. Meanwhile, it is obvious that the most important factor in determining standards is the quality of individual teachers, so the teacher-training reforms allow us to make an interim assessment.

Since he became Secretary of State for Education and Employment (in other words, Nearly Everything That Tiny Blair Thinks is Really Important), Mr Blunkett has acted quickly on the pledges in Labour's manifesto. In come smaller classes; out go vouchers and the assisted places scheme. The priority for education is not just page 1, line 1 of Mr Blair's "contract with the people", it also represents a substantial section of the manifesto, full of specific policies, contrary to the widespread perception that this was a bland and waffly document. But, as we have seen since the election, Labour's policies fall into two broad groups: exhortation and action. Of course, exhortation and rhetoric can be valuable, but action is better. This dichotomy is particularly marked in the field of teacher quality.

It is not enough for Mr Blunkett and Estelle Morris, his deceptively quiet-spoken junior minister, simply to urge teacher training colleges to return to traditional methods, or "tried and tested methods of teaching" as yesterday's announcement put it. There are specific and practical things which produce results, and it is not enough to repeat the mantra about the "spread of best practice". Best practice has to be codified and mechanisms put in place to ensure that all schools do it.

This is not a matter of one simple, overarching teaching "method". The best teachers use a mix of whole-class (or "whole-class interactive" in Labour's jargon), group and individual teaching. All good teaching is "child-centred" in the sense that children have no chance of expressing their individuality if they are not literate and numerate. Yesterday, the Government moved sharply in the right direction, with a "vanguard" of 12 teacher training colleges adopting the new programme from this September, and the threat of withdrawal of funds hanging over colleges which do not like it.

That is the supply side of the mechanism for improving what actually happens in classrooms, but the demand side matters, too – not least because rewriting the curriculum for teacher training colleges will do nothing about existing teachers, too many of whom are simply not up to scratch. Headteachers and deputy heads have to demand best practice from their staff. They should have more power to hire and (especially) to fire, and Mr Blunkett is doing something about that. But they also need to reward good teaching. The pay of heads and deputies should reflect performance, which is why the outcry over the idea of £70,000 salaries for headteachers is misplaced. There should be more £70,000 heads, and more primary heads paid more where they are good enough to merit the money. The whole system has to shift towards rewarding merit rather than length of service or "additional responsibilities".

One of the most worrying news items this week was the sharp fall in the number of applications for teacher training. But given that there is no question of raising significantly the pay of the teaching profession as a whole, the only way to attract enough good candidates is to persuade them that high ability will be recognised by high pay. It is an uncomfortable truth that pay differentials are probably too compressed, especially in primary schools.

This does bring us to the question of public spending. Labour's pledge is to "increase the share of national income spent on education as we decrease it on the bills of economic and social failure". Easier said than done. Given that education is an urgent priority now but that the benefits take a long time to come through, the logic of the Government's stance points in the opposite direction, towards cash up front for payback later. We return – while acknowledging that it is too late to influence the content of next week's Budget – to our concern about Labour's public spending priorities. The centrepiece of Gordon Brown's big show on Wednesday will be his "well-fare to work" plan, a commitment set in concrete two years ago and now looking as if it is holding up the wrong part of the edifice. We pointed out during the election campaign that there were already too few young people unemployed for more than six months to make sense of the pledge to take 250,000 of them off benefits and into work. The Chancellor's response has been to loosen the criteria, to include young people who have been out of work for shorter periods, making this one of the new Government's easier promises to keep. It would be much better to use the chance to transfer some of the money further down the food chain. For a government that is serious about causes, it makes more sense to spend the proceeds of the windfall tax on the next cohort of young people – those 14- to 19-year-olds who are still at school or college who might benefit from improved vocational education. In terms of employability, the taxpayer gets a bigger bang per buck spent on education and training in the 14-19 age group than on remedial schemes for 18-25s.

The Government has made an impressive start on its education priorities. But the urgent need is for the many bright ideas for practical improvements to be pushed through by motivated leadership at all levels. Persuasion will not be enough: goads must be used. The targets for literacy and numeracy set for 2002 are specific and demanding, but it is not an exaggeration to say that the Government's credibility rests on their fulfilment. Time to do, as someone once said.

## It's a genuine database, honest

As ever, a national database is the answer to the problem. Which problem? This time, it is fakes. Trading standards officers have fallen victim to the same impulse that has prompted the purchase of millions of PCs. If you put all your information into a computer, your life will magically become organised. So the next time you buy a £5 Rolex, or a £2 Givenchy, you will know it is genuine. Meanwhile, let's hope the dress (allegedly once worn by a princess) that went for £120,000 is the real thing.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Labour policy reform stifles grassroots

Sir: Your report ("Defiant activists to fight Blair on reforms", 23 June) of widespread opposition to the conduct of the "Labour into Power" exercise is timely and generally accurate.

However, the document circulated in February was for discussion only. Detailed proposals will not be published until the autumn, shortly before Annual Conference, and no one knows what they will be. Those likely to be most affected, constituencies and affiliated organisations, will have virtually no opportunity to discuss or amend them before final decisions are made. More time is vital if the process is to have credibility in the wider party.

The process is not criticised primarily on the grounds that it will take power from the grassroots. Past debates on unilateralism showed that whatever Conference says, ultimately the party leadership decides policy.

The anxiety is that if constituencies and affiliates are unable to submit resolutions, the grassroots will be unable to initiate debate or even to express an opinion. Far from "neutralising internal strife" this may exacerbate it by removing any forum for the orderly discussion of legitimate concerns. Further, it will make Labour the only major party whose Conference does not debate constituency party resolutions, making the Conservatives look democratic in comparison.

SIMON McKEOWN  
ANN BLACK  
TIM PENDRY  
Steering Committee  
Labour Reform  
Birmingham

Sir: The Labour Party old left should be apologising for their mistakes of the past, not trying to repeat them. Ken Livingstone's opposition to the Labour into Power conference document and coverage of Alan Simpson's *Red Pepper* attack and New Britain's opposition to devolution (reports, June 25) are a real diversion from pressing on with the modernisation of the party.

The people of this country demonstrated last month that they want a party committed to democracy, equality and enterprise to take them into the next century, out some 19th-century socialist party. New Labour can become a real left-wing party of government by breaking with its bureaucratic past (like union bloc votes) and continue to include the voices of contemporary Britain.

If the old left cannot adjust to the new reality, then by all means let them live in the fantasies of *Red Pepper* and debate with Arthur Scargill. The rest of us want the Labour Party to get on with the real business of delivering jobs, rebuilding education and health and creating a democratic society. JOHN STRAWSON  
London N19

Sir: Perish the thought that Donald MacIntyre should ever be disciplined for being off message in *The Independent*. There wouldn't be much point in reading him and buying *The Independent* if he and it read like *Pravda*. So why does he take such an uncompromising view of Labour MP Alan Simpson ("Spare the rod and spoil the child" – the whip's dilemma", 25 June)? Intelligent, independent member of Parliament



happens to be a member of *Tribune's* editorial board!

Alan Simpson is criticised for speaking out against the Party into Power proposals that would centralise decision-making in the Labour Party and turn the annual conference into a dreary version of the stage-managed event (that passes for the annual Conservative Party conference).

If May have escaped Mr MacIntyre's attention that *Party into Power* is a consultative document, which has been debated at constituency Labour parties and trade unions up and down the country. Many take a similar view to Alan Simpson, as they are fully entitled to do.

MARK SEDDON  
Editor  
*Tribune*  
London WC1

### Cook denies Hong Kong 'snub'

Sir: Steve Crawshaw's report from Hong Kong ("Democrats' leader left out in the cold", 26 June) is a lurid distortion of the truth. The Prime Minister and I each had long meetings with Martin Lee in London only three weeks ago. I have agreed that the only Hong Kong elected politicians invited to dinner on *Brilliant* this Saturday will be Martin Lee and two other prominent Hong Kong democrats. I look forward to talking to him again then.

To describe this as a snub is to stand normal usage on its head. ROBIN COOK MP  
Secretary of State  
for Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
London SW1

Sir: On 17 June, the Governor of Hong Kong, Chris Patten, remarked that Hong Kong would be the first example of a colony becoming less democratic after the end of colonial rule than before.

I'm sure that there are several examples to prove him wrong but one that springs to mind is the former Dutch possession of West New Guinea.

In February 1961, the people elected a National Council which then voted to rename the territory West Papua. They also chose a flag and national anthem in the full hope that the Dutch would honour their pledge to allow the people the right to self-determination.

A little over a year later that promise was broken and the territory and its people were handed over to the Indonesian dictatorship of Sukarno. Indonesia's first act was to round up a crowd of 10,000 Papuans to watch a bonfire of West Papuan flags and other items relating to their national identity, then the elected West New Guinea Council was disbanded and replaced by an Indonesian appointed regional assembly with none of the original council members included in it. Any other political activity such as rallies, meetings or the distribution of political material was banned.

Thirty years later the West Papuans are still being denied their democratic rights. I sincerely hope that Hong Kong fares better. JOHN SALTFOORD  
Manchester

### Secrets of the Greenwich dome

Sir: Louis Hellman (Letters, 26 June) has difficulty identifying the "symbolic significance" of Richard Rogers' breathtaking Millennium Dome.

The answer is that this project is the most dramatic – and I suspect also the biggest – manifestation of a range of exciting developments in materials technology and structural engineering, many of which have been pioneered in Britain. These developments – combining hi-tech fabrics and tensioned constructional forms – make possible the creation of large, light, flexible structures that are dramatic to appearance; contain huge, uncluttered spaces; can be built relatively quickly; and may be altered if tastes or requirements change over time.

Other notable examples include buildings by Michael Hopkins such as his wonderful Mound Stand at Lord's cricket ground, the Schumacher Research Laboratory near Cambridge, the new Island Revenue building in Nottingham and the Glyndebourne Opera House.

The dome of St Paul's Cathedral and the Dome of Discovery at the Festival of Britain were both important innovations of their own time which exploited the techniques and materials then available to architects. The former took 35 years to build; the latter, for the record, is said to have leaked.

If Mr Hellman seeks a one-word answer to his rhetorical question it is "progress" – something of which any sensible nation would be proud. DAVID ROBERTSON  
Technology Response Ltd  
West Malvern, Worcestershire

Sir: I do not think I am alone in my amazement that the Cabinet has decided to support the Greenwich site as the focus of the British celebrations of the Millennium. I note with approval that the primary aim of Tony Blair's government is to ensure that the celebrations are enjoyed by the entire population of these islands.

Measures should be instituted to ensure that all inhabitants of Great Britain and Northern Ireland have equal access to the event. The measure which would most directly achieve this would be for the ticket to visit Greenwich to include in the standard purchase price the full transportation costs from the place of residence in the UK to the exhibition site, be it by Underground, rail, bus, sea, air or a combination of these.

Of course, this will require in effect a subsidy paid by those living close to the site to those living farther away, but, surely, such a uniform ticket price would be acceptable to people who are fortunate to live close to Greenwich. DR DAVID BAYNE  
Penarth, Vale of Glamorgan

### Volumes of verse too slim today

Sir: Thank you for putting in a word or two for the plight of penurious poets (Letter from the Editor, 21 June). It's good that you praise the quality and readability of our work, comparing it favourably with that of prose writers, even one so prestigious as Martin Amis.

One reason, in my view, for the failure of contemporary poets to achieve huge sales is the craven attitude of publishers of poetry. Before the war, the poets were published in handsome octavo hard-cover editions at little less than the price of a novel; thus they were in the public eye – today they are shovelled into minuscule paperback editions at around a fiver and not many people buy them. Yet the favourite poets, like Hardy, Housman and Betjeman, sell in thousands continually. There's no version to poetry among the reading public. JOHN BATE  
Oxford

### Godless

Sir: *The Independent's* example of Arabic script "from the Koran" is in danger of causing as much offence to Muslims as the Nike logo ("Nike to trash trainers that offended Islam", 25 June), for the crucial words "but God" have been omitted.

Your line of script in fact translates, albeit illogically, "There is no God... and Mohammed is the messenger of God". JOHN CROOK  
Winchester

### GPs with talking difficulties

Sir: We welcome the report from Mencap highlighting the failings in GPs' care for people with learning difficulties ("GPs ill-prepared for patients with learning difficulties", 23 June).

The King's Fund's work with people with learning difficulties shows that many of them are not receiving the preventive health care from doctors that they deserve. This is not necessarily the doctors' fault, since communicating with people who may not be able to speak is a complex skill. Additional problems of confidentiality arise when adults with learning difficulties need a carer or a parent to sit in on the consultation.

At the King's Fund we suggest that medical training should include how to deal with this special group; that there should be a standard set of symbols for doctors to use in their practices and that preventive health care checks should be carried out as a matter of course for people with learning difficulties as they are for other distinct groups such as older people.

There should also be support to all primary healthcare staff to work in partnership with people to improve the quality of their lives. BARBARA McINTOSH  
Project Manager  
Day Service Design  
King's Fund  
London W1

Sir: Mr J N Johnson (Letters, 23 June) comments on evidence that surgeons in training often perform complex procedures for the first time without supervision. He explains that if the consultant was in the same operating theatre as the trainee surgeon then waiting lists would soar and hospitals would go bankrupt.

Implied in his statement is the view that in order to prevent the hospital from getting into debt some surgeons will not necessarily practise best practice in relation to some patients who happen to be under a trainee surgeon's knife. This is a remarkable view coming from a senior figure in the British Medical Association. It negates the professional responsibility of the consultant to the patient – for he or she is still the consultant's patient even though it is the trainee surgeon who is operating.

It may be that the pressures and distortions of the internal market have driven some doctors to behave as though they are accountants.

If a surgeon believes that he should be in the same operating theatre as the trainee who is carrying out a complex procedure for the first time – then it is absolutely clear where that surgeon should be. Impending bankruptcy notwithstanding. DR GERALD DE LACEY  
Consultant Radiologist  
Northwick Park and St Mary's NHS Trust  
Harrow, Middlesex

### Young masters

Sir: The current phenomenon of youthful political leadership might more accurately be labelled "neotocracy" rather than engineer a dubious linguistic hybrid "juventocracy" (Letters, 21 June). Or better still, in deference to William Pitt Jr and other youthful precursors, "neotocracy". STAN UNDERWOOD  
Carlton-le-Moorland, Lincoln

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# Blair sets Ulster its biggest test

The Government's initiative on decommissioning arms challenges Sinn Féin to decide where it stands, says David McKittrick. For Unionists, too, the next few months will prove crucial

At this moment hope and dread co-exist in Northern Ireland. Tony Blair's energy and attack this week instilled unfamiliar urgency into the search for progress as he set timetables for both the paramilitaries and the politicians.

But at the same time the dreary steeple of Drumcree parish church casts a long and ominous shadow over not just politics but over all of life in Northern Ireland, for fears are high that another confrontation is on the cards when the Orange brethren gather there on Sunday week.

The large numbers of sashes and other paraphernalia sold to new Orange members shows that many among the Protestant grass-roots are gearing up for yet another determined assertion of what they see as their heritage. Since last year's clashes the Orange ranks have been swelled by hundreds of recruits, many of whom have what might be described as a militant tendency.

While many Orange greybeards would prefer to avoid confrontation, power in the marching season passes from the stately Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland to the men and youths on the streets. As one senior Orangeman said this week: "There's an air of excitement among the younger

ones in the [Orange] institution. The overriding thing is that at this time of the year they're easily worked up.

"Large numbers of them are unemployed — the economy doesn't make any difference to them. A lot of them don't start out to wreck the town but they come out and somebody says 'Right, boys' and they get going and then there's no stopping them."

Many non-members of the order — Protestants and Catholics alike, are voting with their feet in a rather different way, by simply getting out before 6 July. Travel agents report a huge increase in the numbers heading for Britain, the Irish Republic and further afield to escape Drumcree, variously describing the exodus as overwhelming, amazing and astounding.

In other words Northern Ireland has just invented refugee tourism. It is another example of how the reality of things here can be so different from appearances: those people in the airport departure lounge are going to look like holiday-makers but actually they will be evacuees.

It is obvious that these are far from ideal conditions for the launching of the type of political initiative which Mr Blair unveiled this week. A bad Drumcree would be a major setback for it and so too would

be more IRA violence, but the Blair message was that he would be deflected by neither.

Either side, or both, may well flex their muscles and in their different ways cause trouble, but if they do there will be a political price to pay. The Blair approach means taking risks, but it has also captured the moral high ground in a way which John Major never quite managed to do.

The Government has laid down that political talks will start in earnest in mid-September. Sinn Féin will be allowed entry six weeks after an IRA ceasefire, with no requirement that republicans should pay an admission fee of handing in guns up front. For David Trimble and the Ulster Unionists the bad news was that the previous government's decommissioning demand has been dropped.

The period between now and mid-September may well provide a real test of the Government's nerve. It will certainly test, and may provide a final answer to, crucial questions over the sincerity of those Sinn Féin leaders who say they want, and can deliver, peace and negotiations in place of war.

On one reading these new arrangements can be portrayed as a victory for the republicans who, ever since the ceasefire of August 1994, have been demanding entry to talks



without the decommissioning of IRA weaponry. Even after the ceasefire broke down in February of last year the central republican proposition has been that of a new ceasefire in exchange for real talks.

In the meantime republicans have prospered electorally, scooping almost 17 per cent of the vote as nationalists endorsed their basic argument that the absence of peace was due primarily to London's refusal to allow the party into talks. Opinion polls confirmed that much of nationalist Ireland accepted that Sinn Féin really wanted negotiations but that John Major did not.

Mr Blair's approach has been to examine the stated republican requirements for talks and in effect to agree to each one of them. They wanted guaranteed entry, a brisk timetable and the removal of the decommissioning proviso: they got them. Some fine-tuning of detail may be necessary, but in its essentials the full republican shopping-list has been granted.

Yet the initial republican response has been one not of jubilation but of uncertainty. Sinn Féin may in fact be experiencing a sense of loss as its familiar and long-successful

eschewing secret meetings with them in favour of openly-announced contacts, and publishing his correspondence to them.

The methodology is almost as important as the substance, for with his open manner Mr Blair has generated new funds of trust with important elements such as the Irish government, John Hume of the Social Democratic and Labour Party and the Clinton administration. Where John Major was always dogged by the charge that he was in hock to Unionist MPs, Tony Blair is already

establishing a reputation for proceeding in good faith.

This is doing the republicans no good at all, since they are much more at home with a confrontational, hectoring prime minister than with a reasonable and obliging one. The republican publicity and propaganda machine may

that the terms of entry would be any more favourable then.

The real test for Unionism will come possibly at Drumcree but certainly by mid-September, when it should start to become obvious whether David Trimble, Ulster Unionist leader, is to shape up as an unyielding tribal warrior or a leader capable of working out an historic accommodation with Irish nationalists.

If there is no IRA ceasefire the talks will begin without Sinn Féin, with Mr Trimble and Mr Hume under pressure to do real business together. That will be difficult enough, but talks with Sinn Féin present will represent a huge challenge to Unionism.

Ian Paisley, his party and his allies will immediately exit, leaving Mr Trimble to decide whether to stay on as the republicans walk in or to join the Paisleyite exodus. Remaining would represent a huge step for a party which has traditionally regarded Sinn Féin as irreformable cheerleaders for IRA violence; but going means consigning the Protestant community to the wilderness with potentially dangerous consequences. The decision would truly be a defining moment.

Thus the coming months may

substantiate or demolish some of the most fundamental aspects of the Northern Ireland question, including whether republicans are capable of delivering peace and whether Unionists can reach accommodation with nationalists.

But next May has now been set as a deadline for political progress, most observers, and participants, will be amazed if any deal has been hammered out by then, whether or not Sinn Féin is part of the negotiations.

In the meantime most attention will focus on whether the IRA will agree a ceasefire again. Most immediately the republicans will want cast-iron guarantees that the decommissioning card cannot be pulled from the pack by Unionists during negotiations in a way which could see Sinn Féin ejected from the talks. If that assurance is given then the last of Sinn Féin's technicalities will have disappeared.

What will remain, however, is the miasma of mistrust which has for so long enveloped politics, the peace process and indeed everyday life in Northern Ireland. This comes not just from the dread of Drumcree but also from the IRA's mistrust of all things and all politicians British, and from the poisonous state of community relations.

Two huge forces are at work here, pulling in opposite directions, both stemming mainly from the troubles. One is the desire for peace, based in large part on the shared experience of a quarter-century of conflict with the lesson, learnt the hard way, that there will be no absolute victory for any side.

But another is that quarter-century's baleful legacy of mistrust and ill-will, which has left the two communities poles apart. The next few months will help answer the nagging question of which of these forces will prevail, and whether the people of Northern Ireland can ever learn to live together, if not in harmony then at least in peace.

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## Goodies or baddies, it's all in their names

The origin of names has always been a fascinating subject of inquiry and speculation, so yet again I am proud to secure the services of that great expert, Dr Vernon Monicker, who has agreed to answer your queries on the origins and meaning of your name, or anyone else's name, come to that.

Is William Hague the first leader of the Tory Party to be named after somewhere foreign? And does his name in fact come from The Hague, the Dutch City?

Dr Vernon Monicker writes: No, there have been leaders of the Tory Party before now who were named after other places.

Could you tell me who they were, please?

Dr Vernon Monicker writes: Well, there was Anthony Eden. I think we can all agree that Eden is a foreign place, if also mythical. And of course Benjamin Disraeli had a name which really meant "from Israel" — indeed, I think his father, Isaac, used to spell the name D'Israeli, with an apostrophe, which made the origin even clearer.

Yes, but surely in Disraeli's day there was no such place as Israel, so how could he be named after it?

Dr Vernon Monicker writes: The name of Israel was well known to people from the Bible. The same is true of Eden. There was no such place as Eden in Anthony Eden's lifetime, but the name was familiar from the Bible. Eden, of course, took the side of Israel in the Suez Crisis of 1956.

Is that meant to be significant?

Dr Vernon Monicker writes: No, I just thought of it.

You haven't told us yet whether William Hague's name is derived from the Dutch city of The Hague.

Dr Vernon Monicker writes: No, it is another spelling of Haig.

What does that come from?

Dr Vernon Monicker writes: Haig is another spelling of Haug.

And what does Haug come from?

Dr Vernon Monicker writes: The Dutch town called the Hague.



Miles Kington

Ah! So William Hague is Dutch after all.

Dr Vernon Monicker writes: Certainly not. A geographical surname was acquired when a man moved away from a place, not when he lived there. If a man is called William Kent, it is a sure sign that his ancestor moved away from Kent and then became known as Kent, or the man from Kent. If he stayed in Kent, he wouldn't be called the man from Kent.

Statistically, you are likely to find fewer people called Kent in the county of Kent

than elsewhere.

Of course, other places do have leaders named after places. President Abraham Lincoln was named after a town in England.

Dr Vernon Monicker writes: So what?

Well, I just wondered if Abraham Lincoln were alive today, what his nickname would be?

Dr Vernon Monicker writes: "Lucky" Lincoln, I should think. Or "Old Man" Lincoln, perhaps.

No, I really meant — what would the abbreviation of Abraham be? Because although in the old days he was called simply "Abe" Lincoln, I am not sure that it would be so simple today.

Dr Vernon Monicker writes: Explain yourself.

Well, abbreviations seem to be changing. A lot of girls call themselves "Abi" these days as an abbreviation for Abigail, even though the shortened form looks vaguely ridiculous spelt "Abi". A lot of people called Abigail are known as "Abi", which also looks ridiculous, partly because it looks exactly the same as the Arab name "Abi", partly because a

girls called Alison are also known as "Abi". We never did this in the old days. Alastair Cooke was never known as Ali Cooke. He might have been called Ali Cooke, at a pinch, but of course he wasn't. Again...

Dr Vernon Monicker writes: Nobody was called Ali in those days. It reminded people too much of Al Capone. Gangsters' nicknames never catch on. Can you think of anyone else called Pretty Boy, or Dutch, or Sun Dance Kid?

Hmm. Thinking of Al Capone, what was Al short for?

Dr Vernon Monicker writes: I should think he was short for very little. Ha ha. I meant, what was Al an abbreviation of?

Dr Vernon Monicker writes: Alan?

Alan? ALAN? Alan Capone? You're joking! Baddies never get called Alan... Can you think of any bad guy called Alan?

Dr Vernon Monicker writes: What about Alan Clark?

Perhaps we can continue his discussion some other time.

هكذا من الأصل



## Brown plans a budget worthy of his hero

David Lloyd George is a politician who has had more mixed reviews from historians than almost any of this century. Is back in fashion. Kenneth Clarke put a cartoon of him on his Christmas cards last year. And Gordon Brown, word has seeped out, regards Chancellor Lloyd George as something of a role model.

That is not all that surprising, given first that he was a fellow Celt, and secondly that there is a distinct shortage of alternatives in Labour's own pantheon. Philip Snowden, class traitor *par excellence* does not do. Stafford Cripps, is, well, too austere. Hugh Gaiskill might be a good if unexciting candidate but the name still has a slightly divisive ring about it. Jim Callaghan had the disaster of devaluation and Denis Healey, however kindly history may judge him, is still widely perceived as having some of the blood of Labour's 1979 defeat on his hands.

But there are positive, as well as negative, reasons for favouring the Welsh wizard. The radical 1909 budget defined the purpose of the Asquith government by having a long reach and laying the basis of the modern national insurance system. Next week's budget, the first Labour one for 18 years, will surely be designed to have at least some of that defining role: it is easy, because we have known about it for so long, to be bored with the idea of a windfall tax to fund work for the unemployed. Easy, but a mistake. The levy on the privatised utilities may be a gamble, though not so much in the raising as in the spending. As a one-off the Government cannot afford to make mistakes about how it is used. But it is a bold step, not tried in any other country and earmarked for a clear social purpose. All the bolder since there are increasing signs that it will yield significantly more than the pledged £3bn. And if it does, then it could well generate welfare-to-work programmes beyond those already publicly identified. Helping to get single mothers back to work perhaps? The one certainty is that the tax on utilities is popular. The focus groups which Labour is using in power as it did in opposition would accept a very high figure indeed.

So the Budget would be a big deal even if that were all it was doing. But it will not be. As with the 1909 budget, the beginnings of welfare reform will be at the heart of it. But it will also have three other big themes: long-term stability, long-term investment, and fairness. Stability is a matter of fiscal as well as monetary policy. Spending ministers like Frank Dobson at Health, already hoping for a lion's share of the £2.5bn contingency reserve, do not need to be told how serious Brown is about the spending part of the equation. Indeed given the optimism about Britain's fast-shrinking deficit some may wonder why they are being asked to wear a hair shirt at all. But Brown has always believed that the fatal tendency of past Labour governments has been to spend first, hurt later. The manifesto was adamant about halving Labour's tax and spend – a historic shift of which Brown, as much as Blair, was the architect in opposition. Indeed Brown hady wants to cut the lowest rate of tax to 10p, an aspiration which he will certainly reaffirm on Wednesday, though enactment could wait until the task force under Martin Taylor of Barclays Bank has completed its study of the tax and benefit systems. And the party's leader-



Donald Macintyre

Lloyd George's in 1909 laid the basis of national insurance. Brown's is also intended to have a defining role

ship, from the Prime Minister down, has been almost as consistent in attacking the borrowing levels generated by the previous government as it has been in ruling out increases in income tax.

Which means that Brown will raise revenue, probably quite a lot of it. Some calculations are that the net increases could be £4bn-£5bn excluding those from the windfall tax. Most, if not all of those taxes, will serve purposes implicit in the Budget's other themes. Green taxes like raising the price of petrol, and even extra duties on tobacco and drink have to be carefully imposed to be fair; they affect the poor most. If they did not Brown would not be pledged to reducing VAT on fuel to 5 per cent. But if, as seems a near certainty, Brown cuts dividend tax credits, yielding a probable £3bn, he will be able to argue that that is a measure, at least in the long term, for investment. Dire predictions of a stock market collapse after the proposal was floated have not been realised. And companies releasing less cash in dividends should have more to plough back into the business.

That does not mean that the Government has not faced a serious dilemma. On the one hand the Treasury case for increasing personal taxes would normally be strong. With more than £25bn of building society windfall cash flushing through the economy, because of an unusual one-off restructuring of the lending industry, you could argue this is a highly appropriate time for raising personal taxation, whether on incomes, or through higher VAT, on consumption. Consumer booms mean inflation, because increased demand increases prices. And inflationary pressures which are not checked with tax increases have to be checked with higher interest rates.

On the other, Tony Blair's jealous guardianship of the manifesto has meant that anything which breaks the cast-iron pledges not to increase income tax, or to extend the VAT base, is taboo. Never mind that Treasury officials, or the CBI, may be clamouring for across-the-board increases, including ones on personal tax. Just imagine William Hague standing up next Wednesday and being able to say, "We told you so. You've done just what we said you would do. You lied in the manifesto." Brown does not want, will not allow, that speech to be made – or at least to be made with any credibility.

Nevertheless, he is determined to be prudent. And the manifesto, as he himself pointed out in well reported speeches before the general election, leaves the Government quite a lot of room. What is more, as Brown certainly knows, one of the previous government's most signal failures, perhaps what got it into most trouble in the late 1980s, was the failure to deal with the impact of City deregulation and the credit boom in 1986-7. The huge windfall from the building societies could pose some similar dangers. Those who say confidently they know just what further changes – like scrapping mortgage interest tax relief or reducing some allowances – will be made should be treated with serious caution. And there will be no tax increase that cannot be explained in terms of the Government's main purpose. But this is a Chancellor for the long term – a radical who wants to be responsible.

## Whose death is it anyway?

by Suzanne Moore

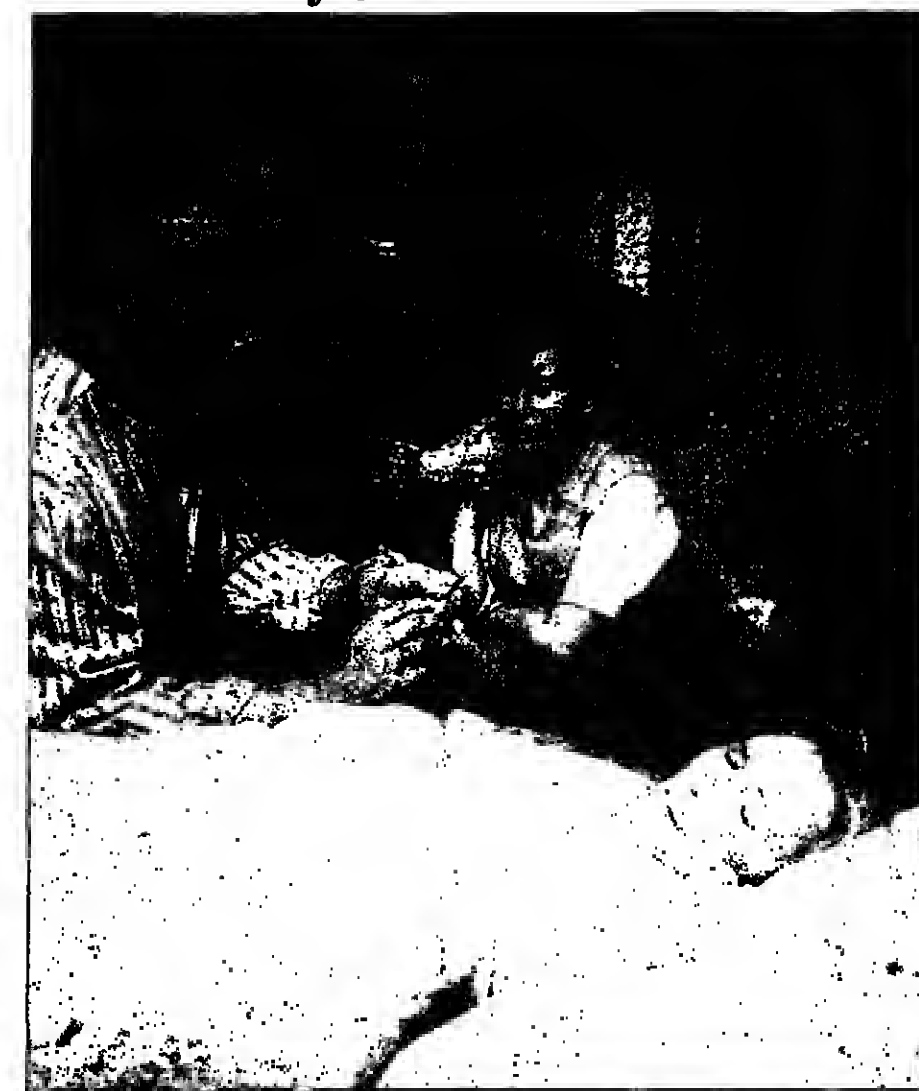
Some people leave their hearts in San Francisco. Unfortunately I just did my hack in, with the result that by the time I got off the plane at Heathrow I had to be taken to hospital in an ambulance. Once inside the ambulance I immediately felt better, confident in the knowledge, because I watch *ER*, that by the time I got to casualty, 15 sex gods would jump up and down on me, forming deeply meaningful relationships with me and each other in the process. Mostly I thought that they would make the pain stop.

What actually happened of course was that I was left on a trolley in a corridor for three hours – "no porters today, love" – and treated as a wimp because the injection they eventually gave me did nothing to stop it hurting. I don't want to over-dramatise the situation. I know I was not going to die of back pain. I know that they probably had far more serious cases to deal with, yet it wasn't until I went into shock, partly because I couldn't move and partly because I realised I was not in an episode of *ER*, that anyone did anything. Even then, the doctors' attitude was that I had already had enough pain relief and that I must put up with it. This puritanical attitude to pain relief will not be news to anyone who has had to watch someone die in an NHS hospital. Individual doctors and nurses may be fantastic but many people are left to suffer when they don't need to, because of a fear of using narcotics.

This issue has been dramatised by *Brookside*, in which we see Mick and Elaine Johnson's mother, Gladys Charlton, with a pillow. Gladys has terminal cancer for months and begs to be put out of her misery. Her GP has told her that she can only prescribe "so much morphine". Why? So far the issue that this drama has been said to raise is the one of euthanasia. The other serious issue preoccupying the press as always is the "Do soaps go too far in their efforts to bust taboos and up the ratings?" issue. The real issue here though, I think, is the one of pain relief.

Unfortunately in real life, as Lora Finlay, professor of palliative medicine at the University of Wales, pointed out last week, the reluctance of many doctors to use morphine means that up to 30,000 cancer patients a year will die in unnecessary distress. There is a fear of addiction, as well as of hastening the patient's death. "You don't kill patients by relieving their pain. Morphine is a very safe drug for pain control," Finlay said, adding that effective pain control may extend life.

In Virginia, some doctors have been prevented from practising because they are thought to have over-prescribed narcotics to their patients. Two patients in chronic pain after car crashes have committed suicide as a result, yet the fear expressed is that these patients are somehow getting high or getting a rush off the drugs they need to maintain a tolerable life.



A bedside vigil for Elaine's terminally ill mother in Channel 4's 'Brookside'

To refuse drugs to those in chronic pain for fear that they may get hooked or, God forbid, actually like them, is a terrible scandal

scribed narcotics to their patients. Two patients in chronic pain after car crashes have committed suicide as a result, yet the fear expressed is that these patients are somehow getting high or getting a rush off the drugs they need to maintain a tolerable life. Certainly when my mother was dying of cancer I found this attitude intolerable. One had literally to beg doctors to up the dose of diamorphine in her syringe-driver (a kind of intravenous pump that means patients can administer their own dose of the drug). Once she was taken to a hospice we all felt a tremendous relief because the pretence of her getting better was finally gone, and pain relief was no longer such a problem. Even there, however, a kind of code was in practice whereby once she had slipped into unconsciousness we had to suggest to the doctors that she was still in pain, in order for them to increase the dosage of

drugs that may in the end have helped her on her way. It is a cliché, I know, to say that we do not deal with death very well, but we don't. The training of medical staff often means that life-preserving measures have to be seen to be taken even with patients who are terminally ill. Thus smoking and drinking is frowned upon even if you have only got two weeks left in which to do it. In contrast, in the hospice my mum was in, a drinks trolley came round with the drugs trolley and we all needed a drink by then.

The sight of Dennis Potter swigging morphine from his hip flask and talking of the pleasures of smoking, in the last interview he gave, burst out of our television screens because it was in so many ways life-enhancing. The prevailing puritanism that says life must be extended at all costs is precisely what brings about the debate on euthanasia. Most people who feel strongly about

euthanasia, and I count myself among them, feel so as a result of watching someone close to them die in agony. This position is reached through pragmatism rather than philosophical debates about rights and the meaning of life.

If giving birth and dying are among the most painful experiences we go through, perhaps we could learn a lot from the experiences of women in childbirth. Different ideologies and approaches in this area have meant that some women feel that because pain is in some way "natural" they must endure it no matter what.

though, as is often pointed out, not many of us believe in "natural dentistry" anymore. Nor do we think that general anaesthesia for major surgery is somehow playing at being God.

At one ante-natal class I attended I was struck by a woman in a knit-your-own muslin jumper and earth shoes. "I bet she wants a natural childbirth," I thought. When the time came to ask the midwife questions, she said: "I've had a natural childbirth. This time I want the drugs in the lift before I even get on to the ward."

What matters, of course, is choice. Just as women should not be made to feel inadequate if they want pain relief in labour, then neither should anyone who is in chronic pain. The natural childbirth movement came about as a result of the over-medicalisation of childbirth, the handing over of midwifery skills to doctors, who often had less knowledge in this field. It was a way of wresting back control. Yet refusing epidurals or caesareans or inductions because they suit the needs of some of the medical establishment should not be the same as refusing all medical advances in this area.

No one should be made to feel that they have failed at childbirth or that they are failing at dying because they cannot endure the level of suffering. We have still not discovered anything that is more effective at relieving pain than morphine, yet because of the associations with addiction we are still frightened of it. My mother controlled her own morphine intake because she did not want to lapse into unconsciousness, even though she was in pain. Many patients do this. She was also brought up to believe that she must endure a certain amount of suffering and not make a fuss. In the end her loved ones had to make a fuss for her.

In *Brookside*, Gladys Charlton's relatives suffocate her because they see no other way out. We cannot stop the pain of death, we cannot stop the pain of loss, but not to relieve the suffering of the dying is a gross inhumanity. Most of us would not let our pets suffer in this way. To refuse drugs to those who need them for fear that they may get hooked, or, God forbid, actually like them, is a terrible scandal but one that does on silently and behind closed doors every day of our lives. It is surely up to the living to extend the life-choices of everyone, even those at the very end of their lives.

## Britain's Hong Kong hypocrisy

Just two years ago, Martin Lee Chu-ming, leader of Hong Kong's most popular political party, the Democrats, put down his chopsticks and in his usual quiet but intense tone: "Mr Fenby, you are an Englishman, so can you tell me how that man can sleep at night?"

Not knowing which man he had in mind, I raised my eyebrows as we laughed together in the Hong Kong Club.

"The Governor," Mr Lee explained. "He has betrayed me. How can he sleep at night?" Mr Lee was talking about a compromise deal between Britain and China over the composition of the bench of judges on the Court of Final Appeal, which will replace the Privy Council as the top court here when Hong Kong becomes a special administrative region of China next week. He said that Chris Patten had taken him aside after a meeting and promised to fight to the last for the formula originally backed by Britain.

"You ain't seen nothing yet," Mr Lee quoted the Governor as having assured him. But, for all the Ronald Reagan words, a compromise was reached between London and Peking, and Mr Lee was left pondering the perfidy of the British.

I don't know how well Chris Patten slept the night before last. Perhaps an occasional pang of something close to anger interrupted one of his last

slumbers in the quiet of his mansion. If there is one theme which the last governor has drummed away at for months it is the complete unacceptability of the provisional legislature which will be installed in the early hours of Tuesday.

This body will replace the legislature elected in 1995, under the democracy reforms introduced by Mr Patten to which China took such grave exception. China insists that the provisional body is essential because the soon-to-be legislature contravenes the agreements it reached with Britain over the return of Hong Kong. And, since Hong Kong will become part of China at midnight on Monday, China's decision is the one that counts, at least until a new, partly elected legislature comes into being next summer.

Mr Patten thunders against the provisional body with the kind of barbs that would go down a treat in the Commons, but sometimes sound strangely out of tune in the rather different air here. Tony Blair announces that he will attend the handover ceremony at midnight, but boycotts the swearing-in of the provisional body a couple of hours later. Robin Cook appeals to European Union governments to join the British boycott. Madeleine Albright says that the United States will walk out in a high-profile demonstration of the Bill-and-Tony show in action

in defence of democracy. And then, on Wednesday morning, as the sound of the British military band rehearsing the Last Post for its final performance here wafts across town, we hear to hear another change of tune. It came first

the best way of kicking off a new relationship with the former colony. But all this had been known when Mr Blair, Mr Cook and Mr Patten were going on about the solemn nature of their boycott. When I saw him in Peking a couple of weeks ago, China's Foreign Minister said, in the most relaxed of voices, that it was up to the guests at the handover to decide which ceremonies they wanted to attend. The ball was in Mr Blair's court. He shaped up to drive it fearlessly to the baseline of democracy, despatching his Foreign Secretary to the net to smash Britain's European partners into agreement. And then, as racket approached ball, he faltered, and went for a dolly shot that bounced inconspicuously into the trammelines of hypocrisy.

It was an all too symbolic final half gesture. British policy towards Hong Kong in the last year of colonialism has been past, be pragmatic. The future Chief Executive of Hong Kong, Tung Chee-hwa, and others against whom Britain bears no public grudge will be sworn in at the same time. To have been completely absent would have been a slur on them, and hardly the best way of kicking off a new relationship with the former colony. But all this had been known when Mr Blair, Mr Cook and Mr Patten were going on about the solemn nature of their boycott. When I saw him in Peking a couple of weeks ago, China's Foreign Minister said, in the most relaxed of voices, that it was up to the guests at the handover to decide which ceremonies they wanted to attend. The ball was in Mr Blair's court. He shaped up to drive it fearlessly to the baseline of democracy, despatching his Foreign Secretary to the net to smash Britain's European partners into agreement. And then, as racket approached ball, he faltered, and went for a dolly shot that bounced inconspicuously into the trammelines of hypocrisy.

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Jonathan Fenby

their names

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## obituaries / gazette

## Charlie Chester

Painter, golfer, archer, songwriter, poet, novelist, historian, casino owner, disc jockey, King of the Water Rats, and - above all - comedian: Charlie Chester will long be remembered for his famous opening phrase: "This is Cheerful Charlie your Chin-up Boy Chester!"

National celebrations will mean less without him: he was BBC Radio's official host for every wartime anniversary, from Dunkirk and D-Day through to his most recent programme on VE Day plus 50.

He was born in Eastbourne in 1913, son of a cinema sign-painter and part-time roller-skating instructor, and a mother who could sing. At the age of seven Charlie sang out loud and clear at a children's competition at the Eastbourne Winter Gardens, and won. It was the first of no fewer than 82 talent competitions he would win before turning professional performer as a teenager. By this time his voice had broken into an attractive yodel, all the rage in the early Thirties. Teaching himself the guitar, Charlie now did a credible impression of Jimmy Rogers, "America's Singing Brakeman", and was soon supplying vocals for the Dixie Dance Band of Ewell. He was 17 when he went out as a solo act for the first time, singing and twanging under the name of Duke Dally.

From one-night stands and masonic, Chester's talent would eventually lead to Royal Variety performances at the Palladium and his crowning as King Rat. But, for all the parade of successes, there would be one area of showbiz at which even Cheerful Charlie would admit failure: the films. After a gag-packed debut with his radio Crazy Gang in a clutch of Min-



'Cheerful Charlie' in 1947

istry of Food Flashes, one-minute newsreel trailers made in one day in 1945, only three proper films featured him in the whole of his 65-year career. He appeared as himself giving a show in *Holiday Camp* (1947), getting the campers to "bob up and down like this", and then singing his own comedy song, "The Farmer's Boy", featuring grunts, snorts, whistles and the famous yodel. Twenty-four years later he appeared as the late Max Miller in a small semi-documentary, *Top of the Bill*, and finally played a small role in the soft-porn feature *Can I Come Too* (1979).

It was curious that Chester should have been cast as Miller, the famous "Cheeky Chappie" of the music halls, for the similarity of their style, facial features, and snazzy dress from snap-brimmed trilby down, had caused ructions in his early comedy career. Even their signing-off songs, complete with guitar accompaniment, were similar. As Chester revealed in a recent television *Kings of Comedy* programme, Miller attended one of Chester's performances, bringing along his solicitor to take notes. Luckily for Chester he had chosen "Cheerful" and not "Cheeky" as his hill-matter. In time after Chester's wartime rise to the top as a broadcaster, the rivals made up and even appeared together in a shared top of the bill.

Chester almost failed his chance as a broadcaster. Granted his first BBC radio audition in 1937, he was warned by the Head of Variety that unless he toned down his gags he would be banned from the air. Reassured by the programme secretary, Chester went ahead with the radio show exactly as he had performed in the trial. Afterwards the Head of Variety sought him out, congratulated him on his good reception, and said he was pleased Chester had taken his advice and changed his jokes.

It was the Second World War that gave Chester his much-needed boost into the nation's heart. As a sergeant in the Royal Irish Fusiliers he was seconded into the army entertainment unit, Stars in Battledress. At this time a BBC series for the Forces, *Mediterranean Merry-Go-Round*, was written and performed by the Armed Services themselves, "Bringing Music and Fun to Boys and Girls in Khaki and Two Shades of

Blue". The naval show was *HMS Waterlogged*, written and performed by Sub-Lieutenant Eric "Heart-throb" Barker; the RAF show was *Much-Binding-in-the-Marsh*, starring Flight Lieutenant Richard Murdoch and Wing Commander Kenneth Horne; the army show was a package supplied by various units, and thus had not the pulling power of the other branches of the services.

Sergeant Chester was ordered to write and perform "A successful radio series!" and he certainly did. Originally entitled *Studio Stand Easy*, it was announced as "Look out for laughs in the next half-hour with Cheerful Charlie Chester and his Crazy Gang of other cranks!" Then came the signature tune, "Shoot the Khaki To Me". This is less well remembered than the signature song full of sound effects that started his long-running post-war series *Stand Easy*: "Ring that hell (ding-dong), hang that drum (bang-bang), sound that horn (beep-beep), shoot that gun (bang!)." The original radio Crazy Gang were "Professor" Ken Morris, who "murdered a song at the piano" every week, Joe Giggs, Len Marten, Louise Gainsborough, Ramon St Clair the tenor, and Arthur Haynes, the only one of the gang to rise above Chester himself in public affection, via his later television series. The hysterical laughter of the studio audience which almost drowned the opening announcement was caused by Charlie and Co silently and swiftly removing the announcer's trousers.

A serial within the show was "Tarzan of the Tapes", featuring Stab-U the Elephant Boy and his regular order to his pachyderm, and "Git up there, Forsythel!" The scene was always set thus, "In the heart of the dreaded jungle of Jazibulla which is situated deep in the African province of Japonica... and everyone who ever heard it will remember the regular chant of the natives: Down in the jungle, living in a tent. Better than a prefab - no rent!"

Later came Whippet Kwik the Cat Burglar, whose whistled signature tune made him a national favourite. Tenor St Clair was replaced by Frederick Ferrari, known as "The Voice". Chester wrote him a signature song, "When Love Descended like an

Angel". Unfortunately that is all he wrote, until listener demand forced him to write a full version so that Ferrari could record it.

Chester was, in fact, no mean songwriter. Early in the war he wrote a hit, "The Sergeant-Major's Serenade", and followed it with such sentimental favourites as "Down Forget-Me-Not Lane", "Primrose Hill" and comedy numbers for the Gang like "The Old Bazaar in Cairo". This included the verse: Rice pud, very good, what's it all about? Made it in a kettle and we couldn't get it out, Everybody took a turn to suck it through the spout!

For a while Chester even ran his own publishing company, Victory Music.

*Stand Easy*, which was given the accolade of a comic strip version in Radio Fun, ran from 1945 to 1951, when the title was changed to *Keep Smiling*. All the scripts were written by Chester, of course, but with the dawn of the sit-com age Pat Dunlop and Maurice Drake were commissioned to write one for Chester. Called *Come To Charlie*, Chester found himself sharing a flat with Cardew Robinson as his valet and Michael Bentine as his zany neighbour. Love interest came from Dora Bryan and Patricia Cuts, who later became Patricia Wayne the film star.

Never one to rest on his laurels, in 1949 Chester founded the Cheerful Order of Chin-Ups, complete with its own bi-monthly journal, the *Charlie Chester Chin-Up Mag*, price fourpence off all bookstalls. Soon Chester's self-promotion style changed to charity work, which would eventually win him an MBE in 1990.

Television called Chester in 1952 and he devised *Pot Luck*, the first ever British audience participation series. Described as a "programme of prizes and surprises", it involved members of the audience passing a pot around until the music stopped. Whoever was then holding the pot had to come up on stage and take part in a quiz. Supporting Chester were Harry Seltzer, recently seen as a venerable but still sprightly comic on Michael Barrymore's television show, and Leslie Welch the Memory Man.

Although *Pot Luck* was extremely popular and ran for some years, Chester's greatest television success was in *Edu-*



Never resting on his laurels: Chester and Lisa Chapman at the opening of his casino, The Golden Casino, 1967. Photograph: Hulton Getty

cated Evans, a series based on Edgar Wallace's popular Cockney opster. There was yet another link with the past here, for Evans had previously been played in films by none other than Max Miller. There were two runs of the series, 1957 and 1958.

After stage productions with his Gang such as *Midsommer Madness*, the George and Alfred Black hit of the 1949 Blackpool

summer season, Chester took over from George Formby in the popular West End musical *Zip Goes a Million*. In later days he returned to radio with his own listener question-and-request series, *Sunday Soapbox*. This started in 1969 and ran continuously until he was rushed to hospital following a stroke.

A staunch member of the showbusiness charity the Water

Rats, Chester was voted King Rat in 1952. He wrote the history of the charity in 1984, and was appointed their Poet Laureate. Whenever a fellow Rat died, Chester wrote a short poem in their memory. Those so honoured include Robb Wilton, Wee George Wood, David Nixon, Sid Field and Sandy Powell. The question now remains, who will write a

rhymed farewell for Cheerful Charlie Chester.

Denis Gifford

**Cecil Victor Manser (Charlie Chester)**, comedian; born Eastbourne, East Sussex 26 April 1913; MBE 1990; married 1939 Doria Langley (died 1992; one son), 1994 Joan Jarvis; died Twickenham, Middlesex 26 June 1997.

## Gp Capt George Denholm

As leader of 603 Squadron George Denholm was involved in the shooting down of the first German aircraft over British soil at the start of the Second World War. This was at Port Seton in East Lothian, the aircraft a Heinkel 1-11 bomber which had overdone to destroy the three-canister Firth Railway Bridge. A year later during the Battle of Britain, in September 1940, Denholm had to hale out of his Spitfire over Kent, just after he had shot down a couple of raiding German planes. Weeks afterwards, he was yet again shot down, after engagement in combat. He was promptly awarded, in October 1940, what was described by Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Arthur (later Lord) Tedder, as an outstanding Distinguished Flying Cross.

The high moment of Denholm's war service in Scotland

came on 10 May 1941. Betty Denholm, a lady of much achievement in public work in Central Scotland, then his young wife of a couple of years, tells the story: "George came home to Bo'ness, and said, 'You'll never guess what happened today.' 'Well, no, I cannot guess.' 'We forced down and captured the Deputy Führer, Rudolf Hess.' 'You did what?' 'We forced down Hess!' 'The whole story is elegantly set out in Lord James Douglas-Hamilton's book *Moave for a Mission* (1971)."

George Denholm was born at Tiding Hill, Bo'ness, the house in which he died 88 years later, into a well-established family of coal exporters and pit-prop/limb importers, based at Bo'ness, on the Firth, from medieval times until the late 19th century the third largest port in Scotland. Educated at Cargillfield

Prep School and Fettes (where he was less than happy), he went to St John's College, Cambridge, where he was supremely happy, and had the good fortune to have C.W. Guillebaud, most practical of Cambridge economists, as his supervisor in Part I of the Tripos. Guillebaud took a lasting interest in Denholm, but advised him to do Part II Law.

It helped greatly that his family were determined that he should have some experience of life and business between school and university - not a fashionable concept in those days. Denholm was dispatched "to learn a thing or two" at a tough Glasgow office, so that he could appreciate Cambridge and his good fortune the more.

At Cambridge, much of his time was devoted to the guns and artillery section of the Univer-

sity Cadet Corps. This gave him a taste for fighter-flying, and prompted him to join the 603 Squadron of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force in 1933, learning to fly at the MacMerry / East Fortune Aerodromes in East Lothian. Going full-time in August 1939, Denholm was a natural choice to lead 603 Squadron on the outbreak of war.

Denholm counted his luck as a survivor of the Battle of Britain. The only occasion that this quietly formidable man was slightly hurt with me was when as a teenager I asked him, "And what did you do when friends or other pilots were not there to eat in the mess, after failure to return from a mission?" "We accepted it, and got on with the job."

In 1941, Denholm was assigned to a bizarre and extraordinary ploy which, like a number of notions from the fertile imag-

ination of Winston Churchill, ended in farce. He had to fly Boston bombers out of Acklington aerodrome armed with huge searchlights, which could be turned on, once radar had picked up enemy bombers, so that night fighters could then shoot them down. Denholm reminisced dryly with the understatement that was his style, that "the scheme was not a success".

He was then transferred to an activity no less perilous for the pilots than the Battle of Britain. In the 16-month run up to D-Day, it was the task of the Mosquito fighter-bombers to strafe enemy positions in the Pas-de-Calais and throughout northern France. This was treacherous - ack-ack fire, the occasional German Messerschmitt, and the difficulties associated with low-flying itself exacted a heavy toll.

Denholm was brave and lucky.

Surviving this, he became the Station Commander at North Weald. Perhaps it was not altogether fortuitous that it was the base of the Norwegian and Danish wing. Denholm, who had been sent by his father to Copenhagen for a year in the 1930s, to look after the Scandinavian end of the shipping and timber business, had a passable knowledge of Danish, at a time when not all Danes were fluent in English. Moreover, his young wife, Betty Tooms, with whom he was to be supremely happily married for 58 years, was partly of "Viking extraction". Their friendship with the Norwegian Commanding Officer, Helge Nohre, was to last for decades. It was particularly fitting that Denholm should be one of the Allied officers who received the German surrender in Nor-

way at Garda Moen Airbase outside Oslo.

Demobbed in 1947, Denholm devoted himself for the next three decades to J&J Denholm. As a Bo'ness town councillor for a short period in the 1950s, he strongly opposed the decision to close Bo'ness Docks in favour of Grangemouth. But once the decision - misguided, in retrospect, in my opinion - was taken, the firm moved to Grangemouth and Glasgow.

His last public appearance was on 27 October 1996 at the ceremony for the rededication of the replica Spitfire - in the colours of 603 Edinburgh fighter squadron - at which he was, venerated, and rightly so, because he was beloved by the men he led. Wing Commander Bob Kemp said, "If the auxiliaries had not been in place in 1939 it is fair to say we would



Denholm: quietly formidable

not have won the Battle of Britain."

Tam Dalyell

**George Lovell Denholm**, air officer and businessman; born Bo'ness, West Lothian 20 December 1908; DFC 1940; managing director J&J Denholm 1947-80; married 1939 Betty Tooms (two sons, two daughters); died Bo'ness 15 June 1997.

## Births, Marriages &amp; Deaths

## BIRTHS

**RODGE:** To Simon and Juliette, a baby girl, Isabella Mary, a beautiful sister for Florence and William. Born on Tuesday 27 May.

## DEATHS

**GUNTER:** Mavis H.D., MD (Cantab), widow of the late Eustace Rieff, died peacefully aged 94 on 22 June, a much loved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. No flowers; donations to Heacham PCC welcomed for the fabric of St Mary's Church, c/o John Lincoln, 40 Greengate, Hunstanton, Norfolk PE36 6AB.

**ROBBINS:** William George, died suddenly on 24 June, aged 41. Despite his periods of disorientation, resulting from being involved and tormented by the voices and delusions of schizophrenia, his warm, fundamental, generous and courageous nature was recognised and loved by family, friends, fellow patients and carers alike. In his times of lucidity and clarity, he never, ever, had a mean thought. Funeral, family and friends, St Marylebone Crematorium, East End Road, London NW2, 11.30am, 2 July.

**Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries. In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephoned to 0171-293 2811 (24-hour answering machine 0171-293 2012) or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. They should be accompanied by a telephone number.**

## Birthdays

The Right Rev Leonard Ashton, Honorary Assistant Bishop, Oxford, 82; Mr Eustace Braithwaite, writer and diplomat, 75; Mr Tommy Cannon, comedian, 59; Mr David Cleland, MR, an Assistant Whip, 54; Mr Alan Cowen, writer, journalist and broadcaster, 59; The Most Rev Maurice Couve de Merville, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Birmingham, 68; Miss Brenda Cowdery, former general secretary, Girls' Friendly Society, 72; Professor Michael Dummett, Wykeham Professor Emeritus of Logic, Oxford University, 72; Miss Shirley Ann Field, actress, 59; Mr Robin Guthrie, director of Social and Economic Affairs, Council of Europe, 60; Vice-Admiral Sir Roy Halliday, 74; Lord Hope of Craighead, a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary, 59; Mr Bruce McGowan, former Headmaster, Haberdashers' Aske's School, 73; Miss Muriel Pavlow, actress, 75; Mr Duncan Robinson, Director, Fitzwilliam Museum, 54; Dr Thurstan Shaw, archaeologist, 83; The Very Rev Alan Warren, Provost Emeritus of Leicester, 65; Mr William Wilson, chief constable, Central Scotland, 54; Mr Hugh Wood, composer, 65; Mr Terence Wynne, MEP, 51.

## Anniversaries

Births: Louis XII, King of France, 1462; Charles IX, King of France,

1590; Charles Stewart Parnell, Irish nationalist leader, 1846; Sir John Monash, engineer and general, 1865; Helen Adams Keller, blind, deaf and mute scholar and teacher, 1880; Deaths: Giorgio Vasari, painter and art historian, 1574; William Dodd, forger, hanged 1777; James Lewis Macie Smithson, scientist and founder of the Smithsonian Institution, 1829; Joseph Smith, "20th Century good design", 2,300p. Tate Gallery: James Macphee, "Faust, Flowers and Magic: Kleop. Redon and Chagall", 1pm.

Constantinople, The Martyrs of Arus and St Zolius of Cordova.

## Lectures

National Gallery: Norman Coody, "Moons (IV): Two Immaculate Conceptions, by Velázquez and Valdes Leal", 1pm.

## Dinners

**Heraldry Society**  
Mr John Brooke-Little, Founder and Chairman of Council, Heraldry Society, presided at the Golden Jubilee Dinner held yesterday at Painter-Stainers' Hall, London EC2. Sir Bernard Ingham was the principal guest.

## Synagogue services

Details of synagogue services to be held tomorrow may be obtained by telephoning the following, Sabbath begins in London at 9.00pm.

United Synagogue: 0181-543 8989. Federation of Synagogues: 0181-202 2263. Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues: 0171-580 1663. Reform Synagogue: 0181-349 4331. Spanish and Portuguese Jews Congregation: 0171-299 2573. New London Synagogue (Masorti): 0171-328 1026.

## Risk of prejudice in French trial not shown

Re Ramda, Re Boutarfa; Queen's Bench Divisional Court (Lord Justice Pill and Mr Justice Aspill) 25 June 1997

## LAW REPORT

27 June 1997

Evidence purporting to demonstrate hostility in France towards Algerian Muslims, and of a media campaign following an outbreak of bombing in France, was not sufficient to show a risk of prejudice by reason of race, religion, nationality or political opinions at the trial for terrorist offences of two men whose extradition was sought by the French Government.

The applicants each sought a writ of habeas corpus. Orders had been made for their return to France following a request by the French government for their extradition. Boutarfa had dual French and Algerian nationality, and Ramda had Algerian nationality. They were accused of offences connected with terrorism. In the second half of 1995 bombings and attempted bombings had occurred in Paris and elsewhere in France. Another man had been arrested and had implicated both applicants.

Ben Emmerson (B.M. Birmingham & Co) for the applicants; James Lewis (CPS) for the Governor of Belfour Prison and the Government of France.

Lord Justice Pill said that it had been submitted for the applicants that if they were returned to France they might be

prejudiced at their trial by reason of their race, religion or political opinion or, in the case of Ramda his nationality, within the meaning of those terms in section 6(1)(d) of the Extradition Act 1989.

A body of material had been placed before the court which sought to demonstrate that there was overwhelming evidence of widespread intolerance and racism in France towards Algerian Muslims which had been inflamed by the press, both generally, and in relation to the applicants and the offences they were alleged to have committed. Terrorism had been linked with Islamic fundamentalism.

A large bundle of press reports had been submitted to support the submission as to racial intolerance in France and that the guilt of the applicants had been asserted and assured. Particular reliance was placed upon a statement by the Minister of Justice on 9 November 1995: "He [Ramda] had played a role that was maybe not exclusive but at any rate essential in the bombing campaign that had struck our country since 25 July."

It was also argued that the French legal system did not have safeguards to deal with the

situation which had arisen. Trial would be by judges alone at a special assize court. The court had no power to stay a prosecution on the ground that pre-trial publicity had rendered a fair trial impossible. It did not give a reasoned judgment and there was no right of appeal save on a point of law. There was no attack on the special court as such, but it was claimed that, in the absence of procedural and substantive safeguards, there was a risk of prejudice at the trial in the particular situation which had arisen.

The French government stated that Article 64 of the French constitution confirmed the independence of the judiciary from the executive. As to the statement by the Minister of Justice, that reflected his personal view and could not have any influence on the criminal trial.

The concept that a public statement made by a Minister of Justice in relation to a major investigation reflected only his personal view was a difficult one. In relation to their section 6 claim, however, the applicants faced an insurmountable obstacle. The risk of prejudice at the trial must be shown to be by rea-

son of race, religion, nationality or political opinions. Even if it could be shown that a media campaign which followed a serious outbreak of bombing did create a risk of prejudice, it was inconceivable that a risk could be present for any of the reasons stated in section 6.

The court had been invited to infer not only that the judges would be prejudiced against the applicants but also that they would be prejudiced on one or more of the grounds in section 6(1)(d). If there were to be potential for unfairness, it could not be said that it might arise from the stated criteria as distinct from other possible factors, such as an abhorrence of the dreadful crimes which had been committed in France by some person or persons.

Generally, no risk of any lack of fairness at the trial of either of the applicants could be found. The status, abilities and experience of the judges of the special court were such as would ensure a fair trial. There was no serious possibility that in performing their duties they would be influenced by inflammatory press reports or the reported remarks of the Minister of Justice. The applications were refused.

Kate O'Hanlon, Barrister

Railtra change



# business & city

Business news desk: tel 0171-293 2636 fax 0171-293 2098  
BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

## Water industry braced for big one-off cut in bills

Chris Godsmark  
Business Correspondent

The privatised water companies were yesterday faced with the prospect of big cuts in revenues after Ian Byatt, the industry regulator, announced plans to make a substantial one-off reduction in consumers' bills in his next price review.

Mr Byatt compiled the announcement with his strongest criticism so far of big increases in dividend payouts to share-

holders, which have averaged more than 17 per cent in the current round of annual results. He said: "I think they're in an unsustainable position on dividends. Their profits are largely flat and their dividends are rising. I think that is an unwise policy and it will have to stop."

Though Mr Byatt declined to estimate the scale of the one-off cut, due in 2000, he made clear he would follow the lead set by the gas and electricity regulators in recent price regimes

for British Gas and National Grid. BG last week accepted cuts of 21 per cent in its revenues this year after taking its fight with the regulator to the Monopolies & Mergers Commission.

The Ofwat consultation document said the adjustment to bills in April 2000 was likely to be "significant" though it had not decided whether it would be in the form of a flat rate across all companies. In addition, bills in the following four years

would be unlikely to rise by more than inflation and could have to drop in real terms each year.

Ofwat also proposed changing the way the companies' huge investment programmes would be incorporated into prices. In future, the industry would only be able to raise revenues from consumers for schemes which raised water quality once the improvements had been delivered. "You don't pay for a new product until it's

produced and available to you," Mr Byatt said.

Though Mr Byatt stopped short of attacking his last price regime, which allowed bills to rise by more than inflation, he admitted it had enabled companies to make much bigger returns than he anticipated.

He also expressed frustration at the failure of some companies to meet the investment targets: "Companies have taken a rather shorter term position than I would have liked them to

do in terms of investment programmes."

Mr Byatt conceded he would have to consider the windfall utility tax, to be revealed in next week's Budget, when setting the next price limits, though it was unclear whether this would reduce the scope for price reductions. "That will affect the capital position of the water companies... we shall obviously examine what consequences that has," he said.

Water companies gave a cautious response to the Ofwat proposals yesterday, which would not be translated into concrete figures until 1999.

The industry had lobbied against the idea of a one-off price cut during preliminary consultation, while consumer groups had supported it. A South West Water spokesman said: "It's early days yet, but we believe we are already working under the tightest financial regime in the industry."

Analysts speculated that the cut could be in "double figures" and some forecast a 20 per cent hit. Research by NatWest Securities suggested one-off cuts ranging from just 2 per cent in the case of Welsh Water to more than 19 per cent for Wessex, to reduce returns in the industry to the 8 per cent level originally envisaged by Ofwat.

Utility share prices increased yesterday after reports that Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, had hinted the windfall tax would be closer to £3bn than £5bn.

## SFA may act over NatWest's missing £90m

Michael Harrison

The Serious Fraud Office and the Securities and Futures Authority were last night considering whether to launch investigations at NatWest Markets after the investment bank announced the resignations of six senior traders and directors over a deliberate cover-up to hide losses of £90m in its interest rate options business.

A spokesman for the SFO said that it had been fully briefed by NatWest and was examining whether or not a complex fraud had taken place. An announcement on whether it will initiate criminal proceedings is expected in a matter of weeks.

The SFA, the main regulatory body for the City, meanwhile said it was examining the conduct of the traders and directors involved to see whether disciplinary action was necessary. The SFA has the power to fine and suspend individuals or bar them from working again in the City altogether.

An independent report into the affair carried out by the lawyers Linklaters & Paines and the accountancy firm Coopers & Lybrand, has been sent to the Bank of England and the SFA. The inquiry found evidence of "deliberate concealment and weaknesses in the operations and internal controls" in NWM's London-based interest rate options business. The mispricing went unnoticed for two years.

However, it concluded there was no evidence that clients had suffered any losses or that the

concealment had been carried out for personal gain as a result of collusion with third parties.

The full report is not being published for legal reasons and to protect commercial confidentiality. But NatWest said its main findings were that:

□ The original losses occurred on mark and sterling interest rate swap options and options books.

□ The losses were concealed by deliberate mispricing and over-valuing of options.

□ Unauthorised transfers of value took place between options books to conceal losses and transfer false profits.

□ NWM did not have sufficiently robust procedures for checking the pricing of options.

Martin Owen, the chief executive of NWM, resigned last week and is expected to receive a pay-off of around £1m. Yesterday NatWest said that a further six employees had left or were leaving the business. The most senior resignation is that of Philip Wise, 48, NWM's chief administration officer, who was senior managing director of its debt capital markets during the time the mispricing was taking place. He was on a one-year contract and will receive a pay-off of £200,000-£300,000. No one else will receive compensation.

Kyriacos Papouis, the 30-year old trader at the centre of the scandal, left NWM last December and has since resigned from his new employer Bear Sterns. He is at home in his north London house and is being advised by Stephen Pollard

of Kingsley Napley, the lawyer who defended Nick Leeson, the Barings rogue trader.

The other employees who have accepted responsibility because of their positions within the division and resigned are Neil Dodgson, global head of interest rate options and Mr Papouis' immediate boss; Jean François Nguyen, managing director of global swaps and derivatives; Ian Gaskell, head of swaps and options trading; and Andrew Groat, manager of the London position keeping team, a back office member of staff whose job it was to reconcile trades and keep track of unusual trading positions. Christophe Lanson, head of risk rate management, was not found to be responsible for any losses or false profits but is leaving NWM anyway.

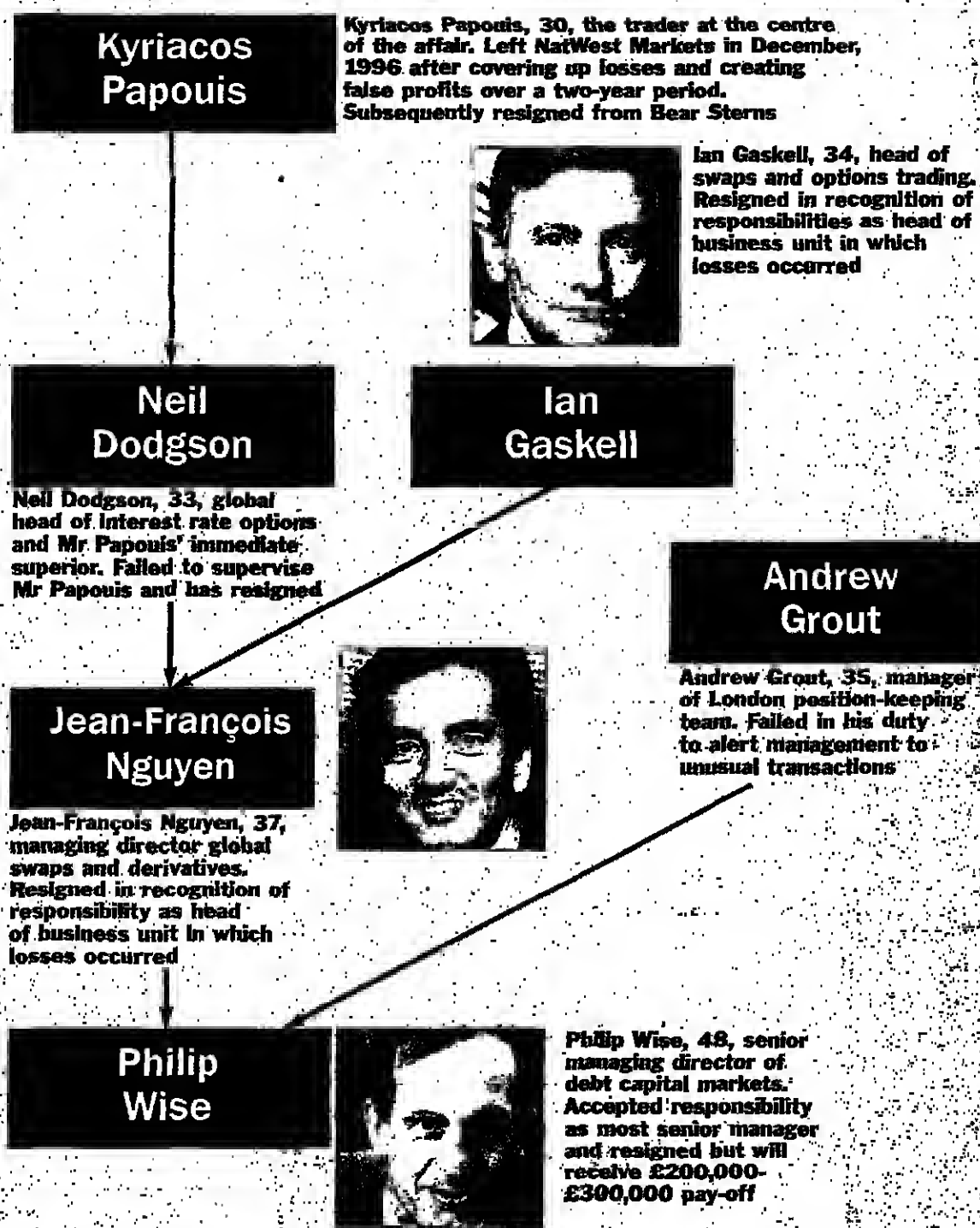
It is thought highly likely that the SFA will launch formal proceedings against some or all of those involved, given the language used in the report and the reference to deliberate concealment and false adjustments to options books.

But it is less clear whether the SFO will take action since no evidence of personal gain or loss to clients has been found. Mr Papouis has co-operated with the Linklaters/Coopers inquiry and is understood to have told investigators that he did not deal in sterling options, where some of the losses occurred.

NatWest said it refused to pay compensation to those who were leaving, other than Mr Wise.

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### How the chain of command failed



## Asda puts pressure on rivals as food sales soar

Sameena Ahmad

Asda yesterday illustrated the increasing dominance of the UK's big four supermarkets by announcing that its sales were growing at twice the average rate in the UK food sales sector. Britain's third biggest supermarket behind Tesco and Sainsbury with 11 per cent of the market, became the latest of the big four to report a rise in market share, increasing fears that second-tier players such as Kwik Save and Somerfield were being squeezed out.

Andrew Fowler, an analyst at UBS, said: "The supermarket is becoming increasingly powerful. Too many people think the issue is about how much share Tesco or Sainsbury or Asda has. But the real story is what happens to number five and six in line as the market consolidates."

Figures by AGB, the market research group, show that the top four supermarkets including Sainsbury had 58.3 per cent of the food sales market in April this year compared to 55.6 per cent at the same time in 1996.

Archie Norman, chairman of Asda and the recently elected Conservative MP for Tunbridge Wells, said yesterday that the group was growing sales faster than any of its rivals. "The business is continuing to perform on track and on schedule. The pace of change is as great as it has ever been."

Asda's like-for-like sales grew at 9.2 per cent in the year to the end of May compared to 7.5 per cent at Tesco and 3.2 per cent at Asda.

Mr Norman said that Asda had no plans for diversification into areas like financial services. "We are not investing in loyalty cards, home delivery, banking in Ireland. We are only doing one thing. We want to be shopkeepers."

Allan Leighton, chief executive, said that the costs of developing a loyalty card, which the company was trialling in 40 of its 213 stores, and financial services so far outweighed the benefits. "Our customers are more interested in pounds today than points tomorrow. We have the technology to launch a loyalty card. But the benefits are limited."

Mr Norman said Asda had no plans to expand its sales of televisions and videos as Tesco was planning to do. "We have been pulling out of electrical goods. We have Tesco going in to the lot - televisions, fridges and washing machines."

However, Mr Norman hinted that with the appointment of Ian Robinson, chief executive of Scottish Power, as a non-executive director, Asda would consider selling electricity and organising customer billing. "We are still looking at it," Mr Norman said. He added that the group wanted to increase its healthcare services and was talking about developing in-store doctor's surgeries, as Sainsbury has done.

## Railtrack bows to demands to change its operating licence

Andrew Yates

Railtrack has made an embarrassing climbdown and agreed to change its operating licence after an increasingly bitter row with the rail regulator, John Swift, over its £160m, 10-year investment programme came to a head yesterday.

Railtrack has agreed to give the rail regulator extra powers to force it to deliver on its spending commitments after Mr Swift threatened to take the matter to the Monopolies & Mergers Commission.

The regulator was determined to make Railtrack change its operating licence and refused to accept any compromises. Up to now Railtrack has stubbornly objected to the demands, claiming they would lead to "more bureaucracy, second-guessing of decisions and a loss of flexibility". But after a no-nonsense meeting with Mr

Swift, Sir Robert Horton, Railtrack's chairman, has unconditionally agreed to the rail regulator's demands.

A joint statement from Railtrack and the rail regulator stated: "Railtrack confirmed its agreement to work with the regulator to produce a mutually agreed licence amendment which would give effect to its public accountability as the owner of the nation's railway infrastructure."

Railtrack's investment programme will be regularly monitored by Mr Swift and if it underpends the regulator will have powers to levy fines or even strip Railtrack of its licence. The two sides are due to meet again early next week to thrash out the final details of the proposals.

The rail regulator became concerned that Railtrack would not meet its investment targets after it became clear earlier this

year that it was significantly under-spending on its £1bn station refurbishment programme. Mr Swift wanted to increase its powers to make sure the shortfall was addressed. "The rail regulator would not take no for an answer and Railtrack finally realised that," said one industry analyst yesterday.

Railtrack's opposition to the changes went right to the wire. Only on Monday a Railtrack spokesman said: "We have no intention of changing our position and changing our operating licence." But the threat of a long, drawn-out, and potentially damaging MMC enquiry proved too much.

The Labour Government is also believed to have put pressure on Railtrack to meet the rail regulator's demands. John Prescott, Deputy Prime Minister, recently met Sir Robert to discuss his concerns over its investment shortfall and is determined to make sure that Railtrack delivers on its promises. He told delegates at a conference for the train workers' union, Aslef, in Torquay last Friday that the regulation of the railways needed to be tightened.

At the conference, Mr Prescott said: "Railtrack is seemingly rejecting a voluntary improvement in its contract to give the regulator tighter powers with respect to providing investment. I would emphasise that unless a satisfactory agreement is reached then the whole question of how Railtrack is regulated will be opened up once more."

If Railtrack had refused to capitulate over the planned changes to its licence then the Government was likely to step in and force Railtrack to act. Neither the rail regulator nor Railtrack would comment further on the agreement.

Comment, page 23

## Abbey National buys Cater Allen for £191m

Nigel Cope  
City Correspondent

Abbey National yesterday snapped up one of the City's few remaining discount houses when it made a £191m agreed offer for Cater Allen. With a history going back 180 years, Cater Allen is best-known for its wholesale money-market business though it has developed other interests in offshore deposits.

Abbey National said the deal would help fulfil its aim of diversifying its profits stream away from its traditional mortgage and savings activities.

Cater Allen's chairman, James Barclay, said that although the offer had been welcomed and recommended by the board, "it is also sad news: said that after 180 years the company is to lose its independence."

Abbey National is offering 580p for every ordinary Cater Allen share. This represents a

31 per cent premium to the closing price on 4 June, the day before Cater Allen announced it had received an approach that may lead to an offer.

Peter Birch, Abbey National's chief executive, said: "The acquisition offers a unique opportunity to increase Abbey National's strategically important growth market which builds upon our existing treasury and offshore business."

Abbey has been keen to diversify into these areas. Last year 40 per cent of its profits were earned from non-traditional businesses. The bank intends to increase this figure to 50 per cent by the end of the decade.

Abbey's treasury and offshore businesses last year contributed more than 20 per cent of the group's pre-tax profits. "Abbey National's ambitions in these areas would be difficult to achieve organically," Mr Birch said.

Cater Allen reported its full-year results yesterday, showing profits of £17.1m compared to £14.6m the previous year. The dividend was held at 30p.

Cater has its origins as a discount house dealing with the Bank of England and is still active in its traditional money-market activities. But, in common with other houses, it has found it difficult to turn a profit in these areas and has sold its futures trading operations.

Instead it has diversified into offshore banking with profitable operations in Jersey and the Isle of Man. Abbey National has two similar operations in Gibraltar and Hong Kong. Another Cater business which may have attracted Abbey is its ownership of City Deal, a private client stockbroker. A few months ago it added Glasgow-based stockbroker Aitken Campbell.

Abbey National shares closed 1.5p lower at 628.5p.

STOCK MARKETS									
FTSE 100		Dow Jones		Nikkei		HSE 100		HSE 250	
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	Index	Close
FTSE 100	4657.90	+17.30	+0.4	Dow Jones	4783.10	+40.60	0.9	HSE 100	3.50
FTSE 250	4458.40	+5.90	+0.1	Nikkei	4447.30	+3.70	0.1	HSE 250	3.72
FTSE 350	2251.50	+7.50	+0.3	HSE 100	2017.90	+3.54	0.2	HSE 350	3.94
FTSE SmallCap	2236.02	-2.20	-0.1	HSE 250	2178.29	+3.19	0.1	HSE SmallCap	3.19
FTSE All-Share	2206.71	+6.74	+0.3	HSE All-Share	1989.78	+1.85	0.1	FTSE All-Share	1.85
New York	7630.72	-58.28	-0.8	HSE New York	5032.94	+3.52	0.1	New York	3.52
Tokyo	20824.76	-54.51	-0.3	HSE Tokyo	12055.17	+2.861	0.0	Tokyo	2.861
Hong Kong	15128.02	+63.00	+0.4	HSE Hong Kong	2848.77	+1.431	0.0	Hong Kong	1.431
Frankfurt	3805.28	+8.78	+0.2	HSE Frankfurt	2848.77	+1.431	0.0	Frankfurt	1.431

INTEREST RATES									
Short sterling		UK medium gilt		US long bond		Money Market Rates		Bond Yields	
Rate	1 Month	Rate	1 Year	Rate	1 Year	Rate	1 Year	Rate	1 Year
UK	5.53	7.19	7.09	7.98	7.14	8.10	8.10	UK	5.53
US	5.53	6.03	6.47	6.89	6.78	6.59	6.59	US	5.53
Japan	0.50	0.84	2.47	3.27	-	-	-	Japan	0.50
Germany	2.94	3.22	5.57	6.58	6.45	-	-	Germany	2.94

CURRENCIES									
£/\$		£/DM		£/¥		Other Indicators		Oil Brent	
Rate	1 Year	Rate	1 Year	Rate	1 Year	Rate	1 Year	Rate	1 Year
\$ (London)	1.6682	+0.22c	1.5425	£ (London)	0.6002	-0.08	0.6483	Oil Brent	17.71
\$ (NY)	1.6682	+0.22c	1.5405	£ (NY)	0.6002	-0.09	0.6491	Gold	337.25
DM (London)	2.8802	+1.24p	2.3579	¥ (London)	1.7286	+0.51p	1.5287	Gold 2	202.71
¥ (London)	189.439	-10.157	168.935	£ Index	101.7	+0.4	85.9	Base Rates	- 6.50pc

## BPB speeds up waste paper disposal plans

Magnus Grimond

BPB, Europe's biggest plasterboard group, is speeding up rationalisation plans for its waste paper business after it slumped into a £3m loss last year.

The group said another of its plants was "under review" following the announcement recently that the Chambers paper operation outside Nottingham was to close.

The group is also still seeking buyers for a mill in Holland. There will be redundancies among the 2,400-strong workforce involved in paperboard

operations, but BPB was unable to say how many.

Jean-Pierre Cuny, chief executive, blamed the strength of the pound for the acceleration of the plans, which came after a £10m swing into loss at the recycled paper operations.

The effect of falling waste paper prices was exacerbated by sterling, he said.

The turnaround was almost exactly offset by a move to average exchange rates at BPB, which yesterday reported a rise in pre-tax profits from £161m to £189m for the year to March. Investment column, page 25



## business

## Profits up 25 per cent at Fleming

Magnus Grimond

Robert Fleming, one of the City's few remaining family-controlled investment businesses, yesterday sounded a defiantly independent note as it announced a 25 per cent rise in profits for last year.

William Garrett, chief executive, said: "Independence is the watchword around here. Most of our successful rivals around the world are independent, particularly the US investment banks."

Morgan Stanley, Goldman Sachs and Merrill Lynch were some of the bank's nearest competitors, he said.

There have been suggestions the family, which controls around a third of the shares, would like to sell. But Mr Garrett said: "The family's position is that they like things as they are."

There were no plans to sell out to a bigger group as other City merchant banks had done, including Kleinwort Benson, which was taken over by Dres-

der Bank of Germany, or SG Warburg, swallowed up by Swiss Bank Corporation, Mr Garrett said. He was speaking as Fleming announced a bounce-back in pre-tax profits to £168m for the year to March, up from £134m the previous year, but not quite matching the £172m reported in 1995. A 14 per cent rise in the dividend takes it to 25p a share for the year.

The results would have been a record, but for the scandal-hit Jardine Fleming fund manage-

ment joint venture in Hong Kong. Fleming saw its share of profits slump from £50.5m to £37.7m after JF was forced to pay out £12.4m to compensate investors after a fund manager at the group was found to have diverted deals for his own account.

The business had lost some customers, with funds under management dipping to just under \$20bn (£12bn) from a peak of around \$22bn, but clients were coming back, Mr Garrett said.

## SIB backs Liddell on pensions mis-selling

John Wilcock

The Securities and Investments Board yesterday threw its weight behind Economic Secretary Helen Liddell's "name and shame" attack on companies which are dragging their feet over pensions mis-selling. The SIB warned that companies which were slow to deal with claims would be dealt with "robustly".

Introducing the SIB's annual report for 1996/97, Sir Andrew Large, chairman, also welcomed the planned merger of the Bank of England's supervisory operation with three other regulators and the SIB as an "exciting opportunity".

Sir Andrew, who retires at the end of July, said the redesign of the system to regulate financial business would "benefit customers and the industry and that will provide continuing and justified confidence in the UK as a global financial services centre".

The report said the agency had been involved in an unprecedented trans-national enquiry into the Hamanaka copper scandal over the past year. It had also investigated more allegations of unauthorised investment business than ever before.

The creation of a "super SIB" has been an important plank of New Labour policy, fuelled by several high-profile banking collapses such as BCCI and Barings, which hit the Bank of England's reputation for supervision. The move to take banking regulation away from the Bank has created tension between the Government and the Bank.

In the report Sir Andrew criticised the two-tier system of Self Regulatory Authorities (SROs) introduced in the 1980s as flawed. He said the system framed by the Financial Services Act 1986 to protect individual

consumers and investors had led to duplication, inefficiency and delay.

The chairman pointed to delays to the pensions review, caused by the requirement for each of the front-line regulators separately to consult their members on the SIB's guidance.

Sir Andrew also pointed to difficulties in following up the consequences of major management failures, such as Barings and Morgan Grenfell, due to the need to co-ordinate the policies and actions of three or more independent regulatory and supervisory organisations.

However, Sir Andrew said that, in spite of the inefficiencies caused by the two-tier system, over the past five years the regulators had secured higher standards in many areas. These included more effective regulation of firms by front-line SROs such as Imro and the SFA.

The past few years had seen

increasing levels of training and competence in the UK's financial services industry, and the extension of individual registration for financial advisers.

The pensions mis-selling scandal figured highly in the report. Andrew Winckler, the SIB's chief executive, warned: "The industry now has no excuses for further delay. We will expect any failure to meet targets for completion of case reviews to be dealt with robustly through the disciplinary process."

Turning to SIB's enforcement activities, the report said SIB was involved in "a major investigation of great scope and complexity into the conduct of certain Financial Services Act regulated investment firms in world copper markets over recent years. This investigation continues and involves close liaison with criminal and regulatory agencies in Japan, the USA, the UK and elsewhere."

## Errors hit First Choice for £8.6m

Nigel Cope

City Correspondent

First Choice Holidays, Britain's third-largest tour operator, revealed yesterday that it had taken an £8.6m exceptional charge to cover accounting errors dating back over a two-year period. The charge increased the company's first-half operating loss to £33.1m compared with £25.7m the previous year.

The company said that fol-

lowing a review of its financial systems, the financial control function had been re-organised and strengthened with new personnel recruited.

First Choice, which ousted its chief executive Francis Baron last November following a breakdown in boardroom relations, is developing a new business plan under the new chief executive, Peter Long.

A full review of operating expenses is being undertaken and

the company said the benefits would be seen from next year. It was now taking a lower-risk approach to the package holiday business.

Ian Clubb, First Choice's deputy chairman, said the windfall share gains from Halifax and Alliance & Leicester building society conversions had yet to filter through to the holiday market.

Reporting a 6 per cent increase in bookings for this sum-

mer compared to last year as at 21 June, the company said the biggest growth had been in long-haul holidays. In the Mediterranean, holidays to Turkey had been growing fast.

After cutting its full-year dividend by a quarter in December, the half-year payout is a third lower than last year at 0.9p per share.

Pre-tax losses were £30.9m in the six months to 30 April against £23.4m previously.

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## IN BRIEF

## Finance director quits GrandMet

Gerald Corbett, finance director of Grand Metropolitan, is to leave the company with a pay-off of almost £600,000. His departure had been expected after no suitable role had been found for him at GMM Brands, the new company that will be formed from the proposed £23bn merger between GrandMet and Guinness. Mr Corbett was paid a salary of £255,000 last year and was on a two-year contract.

However, the timing of his departure surprised some in the City who said that if the deal was blocked, GrandMet would find itself without a finance director. Mr Corbett lost out to Guinness's Philip Yea in the battle for the finance director position at GMM Brands. He was offered the post of strategy director but turned it down. The company said he had since received "several offers".

## Profits slip at Lehman Brothers

Confirming a downward blip last spring in Wall Street profits, Lehman Brothers revealed that its second quarter earnings this year slipped from first quarter levels. Lehman, which in recent weeks has been widely seen as a takeover target, said its net earnings for the quarter totalled \$121m (£73m), down from \$144m in the first quarter. Even so, the second quarter earnings compared favourably with the same quarter last year, when they came in at \$108m.

"Overall, the first half of 1997 was a very good one for the firm," commented Richard Fuld, Lehman's chairman and chief executive. "Despite an extremely difficult trading and underwriting environment in March and April, the second quarter earnings reflect continued progress in building on Lehman Brothers' position as a leading global investment bank."

## Rhône deal creates global drugs business

Rhône-Poulenc, the French chemicals group which owns Fisons, is buying in the 32 per cent it does not already own of Rhône-Poulenc Rorer, the Franco-American drug company, for \$2.5bn (£2.6bn). The move creates yet another global life sciences business in an industry characterised by large scale consolidation. Deals seen in the drugs industry over the last five years include the takeover of Wellcome by Glaxo, the spin-off of Zeneca from ICI and the mergers of Pharmacia and Upjohn and Swiss groups Sandoz and Ciba. Rhône-Poulenc plans to spin off its chemicals, fibres and polymers side in preparation for a stock market flotation.

## MAM and Yorkshire call a truce

Mercury Asset Management and Yorkshire-Tyne Tees Television have called a truce in their bitter war of words over Granada Group's bid for the television company. MAM, one of Yorkshire's biggest institutional shareholders, has been vocal in its disappointment at Granada's £11.75 a share offer. MAM yesterday called Yorkshire and both companies agreed to refrain from public comment about the issue.

## Thames and BBC sell Flextech shares

Pearson's Thames Television subsidiary sold 4 million shares in Flextech, the cable and satellite programmer, at 605p each. BBC Worldwide Investments dispensed with 3.8 million shares at the same price. Flextech said it had requested the sale because of "considerable demand" from institutions in the UK and overseas. At the same time, the company's chairman, Adam Singer, bought 50,000 shares at 605p. Pearson and the BBC continue to hold 4.8 million and 1.6 million Flextech shares respectively.

## Dai-ichi executives indicted over payoffs

Four former executives of Dai-ichi Kangyo Bank have been indicted for making illegal payoffs. Tokyo prosecutors said that two former Dai-ichi Kangyo executives and two other former directors of the bank made illegal payments of more than 11.7 billion yen (£2.2m) to an alleged corporate racketeer through an affiliated finance company.

## US jobless claims down

The number of new jobless claims in the US fell to 332,000 last week, down from 346,000 the previous week. But the four-weekly average reached its highest level for six months, climbing to 338,750 due to increases in the previous weeks. The latest state level figures showed declines mainly in the south, but also in California and New York.

## Glaxo sells US production unit

Glaxo Wellcome's US subsidiary has agreed to sell its production facility in Greenville to Catalytic Pharmaceuticals for £150m. Glaxo said that the proceeds from the sale would be used to reduce group borrowings, and would help it achieve planned cost efficiencies.

Company Results				
	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Asda (F)	7.0bn (6.0bn)	405.2m (511.5m)	10.6p (7.9p)	2.2p
Burton Group (F)	485m (334m)	75.0m (43.2m)	51.4p (34.8p)	8.5p
BP (F)	1.3bn (1.42bn)	189.1m (161.4m)	25.0p (20.4p)	10.3p (8.7p)
Charles Group (F)	20.3m (16.5m)	707.0m (660.0m)	2.57p (2.55p)	1.0p
Compass (F)	9.0m (2.6m)	312.0m (267.0m)	0.86p (1.10p)	0.9p (0.1p)
CLM Insurance (F)	- (-)	15.7m (2.2m)	12.6p (1.77p)	10.78p (2.7p)
Debenhams Retail (F)	66.16m (49.36m)	4.89m (2.28m)	6.19p (2.78p)	2.4p (1.5p)
First Choice Holidays (F)	373.7m (386.2m)	22.8m (23.4m)	9.4p (7.5p)	9.5p (11.4p)
Fininvest First (F)	2.4m (1.7m)	615.0m (313.000)	1.48p (1.30p)	nil
GUS (F)	2.8bn (2.7bn)	570.6m (551.1m)	37.6p (38.4p)	18.0p (16.5p)
Harveys & Hanson (F)	17.1m (16.3m)	4.01m (3.82m)	10.81p (10.52p)	4.2p (3.8p)
James & Spence (F)	20.4m (19.1m)	1.66m (1.73m)	5.7p (6.5p)	1.5p (0.75p)
Kentel Systems (F)	41.3m (35.2m)	7.43m (6.06m)	40.5p (33.7p)	9.6p (8.8p)
Midland Holdings (F)	177.2m (20.2m)	8.07m (5.19m)	0.62p (0.51p)	0.10p (0.77p)
ML Holdings (F)	101.7m (110.8m)	8.13m (11.13m)	3.3p (2.5p)	1.6p
Norcross (F)	234.6m (265.5m)	55.2m (13.7m)	5.9p (2.3p)	2.0p (nil)
Regal Properties (F)	42.9m (16.6m)	4.02m (1.58m)	2.44p (1.38p)	1.0p (0.5p)
Sydney (F)	76.4m (65.2m)	5.66m (4.31m)	14.9p (12.88p)	6.4p (5.72p)
Xavier (F)	- (-)	582.000 (46.000)	0.63p (0.29p)	nil

(F) - Final (I) - interim (N) - New months

20100101



iddell on  
s-selling



COMMENT

The big water and sewerage businesses hoodwinked Mr Byatt during his last price review in 1995, producing a regime which allowed bills to rise well above inflation and enabled companies to pay out huge amounts of cash to shareholders.

## Water regulator turns off the dividend tap

The trickle-down effect, as applied to utility regulation, looks like having a particularly nasty impact on the water industry even though the City did not quite seem to take it on board yesterday.

Where Clare Spottiswoode of Ofgas and Stephen Littlechild at Ofwat have already gone, Ian Byatt at Ofwat has decided to follow. Yesterday he duly spent out what the water companies have seen coming for months which is why they have been splashing out cash on dividends with an abandon that borders on desperation. The party is finally over.

The big water and sewerage businesses hoodwinked Mr Byatt during his last price review in 1995, producing a regime which allowed bills to rise well above inflation and enabled companies to pay out huge amounts of cash to shareholders. Between 1991 and 1995 the real return in the water industry never fell below 12 per cent. Even last year it was 11.45 per cent, against Ofwat's target of 6-8 per cent. The latest round of dividend payouts has averaged more than 17 per cent. And all this in what Mr Byatt emphasised yesterday was a "low risk" industry.

The industry can kick and scream as much as it likes - and the path to the MMC is littered with corpses - but it now faces double figure price cuts from 2000 and stiff price curbs in the years that follow. This is worse than anything the companies had predicted and enough to slash their profits by perhaps as much as 20 per cent. In short, Mr Byatt

is going to "do a Spottiswoode," replicating the attack on British Gas which so publically backfired on the company last week.

But the outcome for water could be worse than in gas, or the electricity grid. In the latter cases the regulators argued today's consumers were paying through the nose for tomorrow's investment programmes which most likely would cost a lot less. Yet the water industry now faces a continued massive investment commitment and price cuts on top.

Should the companies try to make the most of the present lenient regime by continuing the dividend party, they will be clobbered harder in the next one. If the regulator gets his way - and he undoubtedly will with strong political support - then in three years' time the industry is going to have quite a hangover.

### Railtrack escapes head-on collision

Meanwhile in another part of the forest the Fat Controller was making up with the rail regulator, Sir Bob Horton. Not even he can see that when a runaway train is coming down the track the sensible thing to do is jump aside and then get up board again when it has slowed down.

The agreement Railtrack reached yesterday with John Swift OC is not the total

climbdown the enemies of rail privatisation would like to depict it as. On the other hand, Railtrack has been left in no doubt who Mr Swift thinks should be in the driving seat.

To recap, Mr Swift had threatened to pack Railtrack off to the Monopolies Commission unless it agreed to amendments in its licence allowing the regulator to set mandatory targets for meeting its 10-year £16bn investment programme.

Sir Bob replied, not unreasonably, that it was Railtrack management and not the regulator who were paid to exercise their commercial judgement as to what investment was needed and where. With a regulator breathing down its neck, it might indeed spend the sums allocated annually but it would not necessarily be good investment. Why spend £100 when you can get the job done for £80?

The solution the two sides have come up allows each to claim a small victory, even though the strangled prose of their joint statement is hardly an aid to comprehension. Railtrack has agreed that if it does not deliver on its investment programme then the regulator can penalise it. How well or badly it is performing will not be measured in terms of "input" - the amount invested - but by what sort of output it delivers - by which they mean trains that run on time and as advertised.

In return, the regulator has agreed that by amending Railtrack's licence he will not be imposing another layer of bureaucracy or

putting himself in a position to second guess its judgement. The practical effect on Railtrack will be to toughen its investment programme - not just over the remaining four years of the current price control but over a 10-year period. That means more pressure on shareholder returns. It could have gone to the MMC to argue the point. But frankly with the lesson of British Gas still fresh in the memory, that would have been about as sane as standing in the path of an oncoming express.

### NatWest's troubles are not over yet

NatWest Group will be hoping it has finally drawn a line over a truly horrible period in its affairs with its statement yesterday detailing what action is being taken over the options mispricing scandal. But having had its weaknesses so embarrassingly exposed first by the options fiasco, then the profits warning, and finally the failed merger talks with Abbey National, it may not be that easy.

The three page statement released yesterday was hardly the fulsome "independent report" or mea culpa on the affair we had been led to believe it might be. If this sets the tone for dealing with City scandals, what hope is there that Hambros will publish the results of the Norton Rose inquiry into the CWS affair? Not much seems to be the answer.

To be fair on NatWest, there are plainly good legal and commercial reasons for not publishing the findings in full. With regulators pushing full steam ahead with disciplinary action and the possibility of criminal proceedings, NatWest has plainly been constrained in what it could say.

Nor does it want to make itself a laughing stock by disclosing in all its embarrassing detail the full story of how Kyriacos Papadopoulos duped his superiors.

All the same, by leaving so many questions unanswered, NatWest is falling a long way short of offering the reassurance customers and shareholders require that all is now fine on the ranch.

The rotten apple and the people who controlled him have been removed, systems of control have been strengthened, and new top management has been installed. But it's clearly going to take some while to eradicate the culture of disregard that allowed this to happen. As for NatWest Group more generally, the underlying structural problem remains much the same. NatWest Markets is not big, strong or cohesive enough to play with the big boys, nor has NatWest's British retail banking operation been able to reinvent itself in the same way as Lloyds and Barclays. In both market places investment banking and retail banking, NatWest is in danger of being marginalised. The trials and tribulations of NatWest are by no means over yet.

## Debonair float to raise £25m for expansion

Andrew Yates

Three main shareholders in Debonair, including the chairman and chief executive, Franco Mancassola, stand to make a profit of more than £12m when the cut-price airline floats on the fledgling European stock market, Easdaq, next month. Besides Mr Mancassola, Dr Wayne Stern, a director, and Anthony Silverman, a shareholder, stand to make a profit of more than £4m each.

Debonair's 500 private shareholders can also expect a windfall from the flotation, which will value the group at up to £110m. It is raising up to £25m, selling 5 million shares priced at between 40p and 50p each.

Debonair only started flying planes last year. Since then it has expanded rapidly and now carries 60,000 passengers a month. From its UK base at Luton airport it flies to Barcelona, Copenhagen, Düsseldorf, Mad-

rid, Munich and Rome. It will use the £25m to increase the frequency of its services and to fly to more destinations. "We will add new routes, buy new planes and keep a war chest for a rainy day. There is no such thing as an underfunded airline," said Mr Mancassola.

As part of the expansion plan, Debonair is going to increase its fleet from six to 10 aircraft within the next 12 months. It hopes to introduce flights to Scandinavia and southern Europe in the next few years.

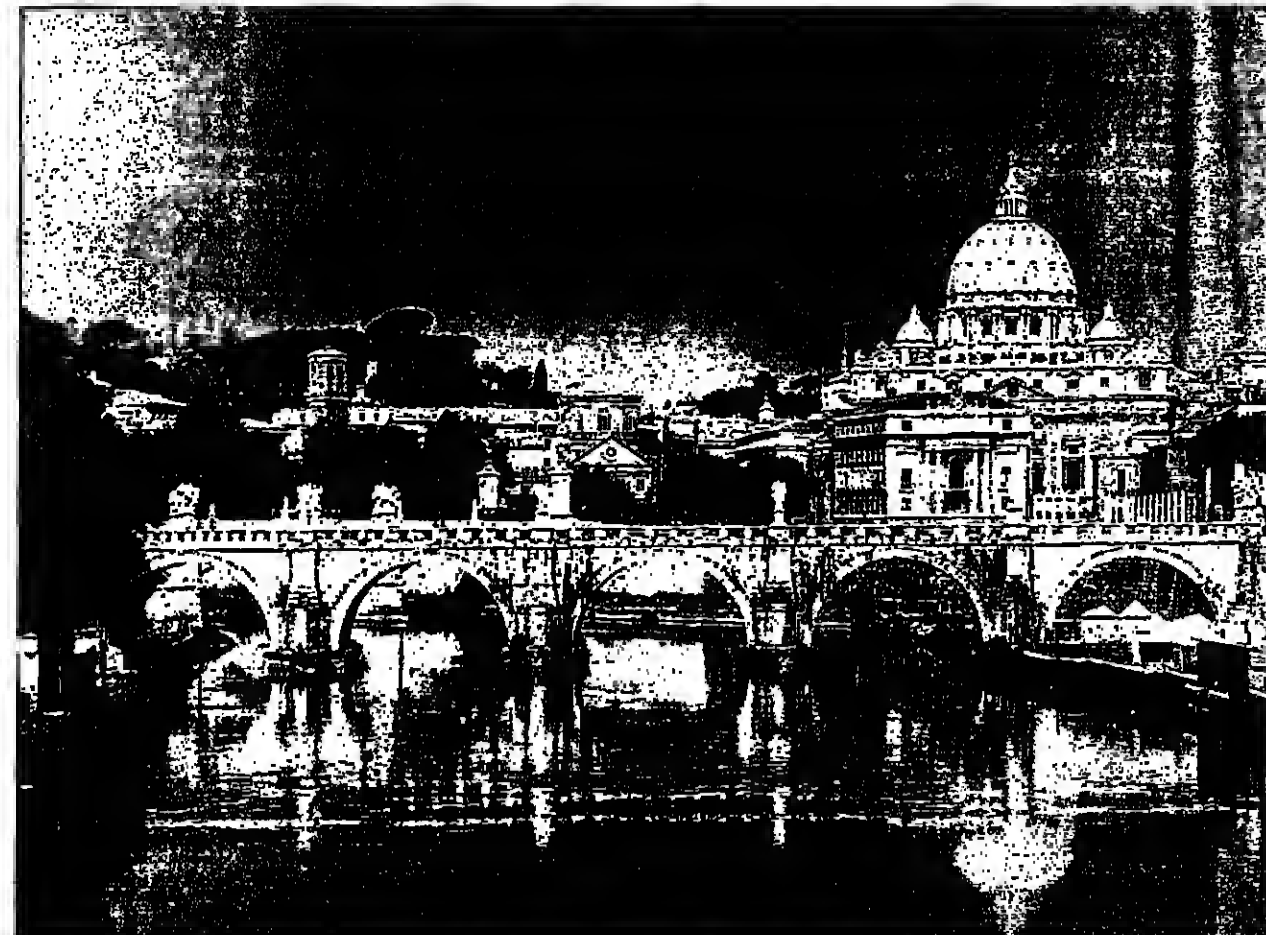
Debonair lost £15m last year, a result of developing its network, but it hopes to make a profit by 1999. Mr Mancassola plans to take advantage of the growing deregulation of the European airline industry which has seen the emergence of several cheap airlines competing with established carriers.

It is following in the footsteps of the Irish no-frills carrier, Ryanair, which has also an-

nounced flotation plans. But Mr Mancassola believes Debonair is different from other cheap carriers. "We have much more generous leg room, we give free drinks and we are installing video-on-demand units, unlike other airlines I could mention," he said.

Mr Mancassola previously worked for Continental, helping the US airline to start up international airline links. Eventually he decided to set up his own airline, Discovery Airways, which operated out of Honolulu in Hawaii. When he sold that business seven years ago Mr Mancassola made, in his own words, "a decent profit". But the sale meant he was prohibited from setting up another American airline. That was when he decided to move back to Europe.

"I decided that I did not want to play tennis or golf for the rest of my life and moved back to Europe instead," he



Across the Tiber: Debonair flies to six destinations, including Rome, but the chairman and chief executive, Franco Mancassola, hopes to add new routes and buy more planes after the company floats on Easdaq

said. With the help of Mr Silverman, who runs a US security business, he raised £14.5m to fund Debonair's expansion. Mr Mancassola plans to meet

institutions over the next month to whip up support for the deal. The shares are likely to be listed on Easdaq at the end of next month.

Debonair's decision to float on Easdaq will be big boost to the market which has failed to spark the imagination of companies and investors alike and

has only 10 members at present. "We wanted to join a European market because we are a European company," said Mr Mancassola.

## GUS plan to end catalogue of woes

Andrew Yates

Great Universal Stores, the catalogue retailer, plans an assault on the direct mail order market in an attempt to reverse the flagging fortunes of its home shopping division.

Lord Wolfson of Sunningdale, chairman, also plans to offer GUS customers personal loans and insurance products to push to increase the size of its financial services division.

"We are looking at new financial services products. We could give loans of £3,000 to buy a car for example. Insurance mortgages and PEPs are also possibilities," said Lord Wolfson yesterday.

GUS is launching four new catalogues this autumn which will be distributed directly to customers' homes. The titles include a Disney catalogue selling characterised merchandise and another selling GUS's own Thomas Burberry clothing line. A new sporty clothing range and a catalogue for the more mature customer will also be sent out. The move is designed to capture a chunk of the direct mail market from competitors such as Next and N Brown. The direct mail market has been growing much faster than GUS' traditional mail order business which sells catalogue items through a network of agents.

The news came as GUS announced its first fall in annual profits for almost 50 years. Pre-tax profits fell 2 per cent to £57.1m. The main culprit was the home shopping division which had a disastrous year, with profits falling 17 per cent to £124m. Lord Wolfson links GUS's core mail order business to a supermarket that has gone of course. "We spent too much money on reducing costs rather than improve service. We are hopeful we can turn this large supermarket around but that will not happen overnight," he said yesterday.

Investment column, page 25

## Millions lost in foul-up by Revenue

Chris Godsmark  
Business Correspondent

Penny pinching on new computer systems by the Inland Revenue has cost the government "many millions" of pounds in lost tax revenues, according to a damning report to be published today by the National Audit Office.

It also revealed that a huge number of irregularities in the pay as you earn (PAYE) system, which collected £105bn of tax in 1995-96, were uncovered during checks by Revenue investigators. Irregularities were uncovered in more than 76 per cent of the 54,156 employers whose tax assessments were reviewed and brought £290m into government coffers in the form of unpaid tax, national insurance contributions and interest penalties.

The NAO reserved its strongest criticism for the Inland Revenue's decision in the early 1990s not to spend £20,000 on a "simple" national database of employers. As a result of the decision local compliance units, which check companies' tax assessments, have been hampered by unnecessary duplication of information.

The report found experiments by the Revenue in building local versions of the database had raised the yield of investigators by 219 per cent in one case and 22 per cent in another. Had yields gone up by just 1 per cent across the UK it would have raised £2.5m in additional taxes. The new computers in the trials had slashed the amount of time wasted by Revenue staff in finding productive cases to review.

Yet instead of building a

temporary national system for some £20,000, the Revenue waited to construct a much wider compliance computer system, at a cost of £6.9m, which is not due to start work until April 1998. Worse still, according to the NAO, the Revenue "felt unable to estimate" how much tax had been lost because of the delay.

Though the compliance teams recovered £6 in unpaid tax for every £1 spent by the Revenue last year, the NAO also found widespread discrepancies between regions and occupations. The proportion of employers visited varied between different trades, though in many cases the level of irregularities uncovered was the same.

Just 25 per cent of employers in the construction industry were reviewed in 1995-96, though 80 per cent of the spot checks uncovered non-compliance with PAYE rules. In contrast 62 per cent of mechanical engineering employers' assessments had been reviewed, though they uncovered virtually the same proportion of irregularities. On average each review carried out recovered £4,300 in unpaid taxes.

Surprisingly, the NAO found fish and chip shops beat accountants as the most law-abiding occupations, though irregularities were still discovered in 54 per cent of reviews. The building industry emerged with its reputation as the biggest tax dodger intact. The worst offenders were equipment hire businesses, where 89 per cent of checks found irregularities, followed by civil engineering contractors and draughtsmen.

## Gates in way when Ellison consults Oracle

DAVID USBORNE  
New York

When Larry Ellison of Oracle asks the mirror on the wall who is the richest and most powerful of them all, he is still hearing "Bill Gates" and it drives him nuts. Now he is trying a variation: "Who is the most generous?"

The famously combative Mr Ellison might have hoped that, challenged with that question, the mirror by now would be responding with his name. On Tuesday, after all, he announced plans to spend \$100m (£60m)

to help put Network Computers, or NCs, on the desks of school pupils all across America.

As it happens, however, Mr Ellison's chagrin must be stronger than ever. It seems that between him and Mr Gates another kind of rivalry has broken out: who, between them, can win the race to claim the title as the Andrew Carnegie of the late 20th century?

And once again, Mr Ellison is finding himself eclipsed by the miracle man from Microsoft. Also this week - in fact just 24 hours before the Ellison an-

nouncement - Mr Gates went public with a pledge of \$200m to be spent equipping schools and libraries with personal computers. Microsoft itself will provide an additional \$200m in software to libraries.

Microsoft insists that its plan had been in the works for at least 18 months and that its unveiling just hours before Mr Ellison's gesture was nothing more than an "unbelievable coincidence".

At Oracle, however, suspicion runs deep. The company is already in a battle with Microsoft to promote the NC, a stripped-

down appliance that draws power from a network, in place of PCs that mostly run on Microsoft software. Officials believe that they were deliberately sandbagged by Microsoft.

Mr Ellison himself said last Tuesday: "It took Microsoft one year to respond to the Internet, six months to respond to the network computer and only six hours to respond to our donation". Oracle's president, Raymond Lane, described the Microsoft move as "pretty tacky".

Regardless of what is driving them, the donations made by

both men promise to open a new chapter in American philanthropy. For some years already, eyes have been fixed on Mr Gates in particular, whose personal worth on paper is some \$18bn, for some sign of interest in giving instead of hoarding.

The multi-billion-earning hi-tech industry has long been seen as laggardly in charity work. CNN mogul Ted Turner said last year: "These new super-rich won't loosen their wads because they're afraid they'll reduce their net worth and go down the list."

## Split Andersen facing showdown in New York

Roger Trapp

The board of the international accounting and consulting firm Andersen Worldwide meets today in an effort to resolve the leadership crisis stemming from the partners twice rejecting its nomination for chief executive.

The crunch meeting in New York follows the failure earlier this week of George Shaheen, head of the worldwide Andersen Consulting business, to secure the two-thirds majority necessary to succeed Larry Weinbach, who stands down as head of the Chicago-based firm later this year. The blow comes just weeks after the 2,700 partners turned down the board's recommendation of Jim Wadia, head of the UK operation of the Arthur Andersen accountancy firm.

Since the 27-strong board drawn from all parts of the organisation has used up both its candidates, nobody is willing to predict the outcome of a gathering scheduled to run into tomorrow. "We're in uncharted waters," one insider said.

Trying to persuade Mr Weinbach, an architect of the original split, to stay on is one option. But it is thought that Mr Weinbach, who is reportedly keen to pursue other interests outside the firm after eight years at the top, will take some convincing.

The firm is seeking to play down suggestions that the impasse results from tensions between the two arms of the organisation by pointing out that both men had secured simple majorities - though not the required "super majority" - in the polls.

However, some outsiders believe the problems are connected to a lengthy review of the future organisation of the firm, which employs more than 100,000 people around the world and last year achieved revenues of \$9.5bn (£5.7bn), almost exactly equally split between the two units.

At a meeting in Paris earlier this year, the partners voted overwhelmingly against a more complete split between the accountancy firm and the con-

sulting operation, which was hived off in 1989. But it is known that some in the firm are irritated that the consulting arm, which has become associated with large-scale information technology and outsourcing projects, increasingly finds itself competing for business against consultants from the accountancy arm.

Other observers, though, believe the troubles may be more territorial and stem from partners in the United States earning more than their colleagues elsewhere in the world.

Either way, the long-running and well-publicised troubles leave the normally coolly efficient Andersen open to accusations that it cannot be taken seriously as a business adviser if it cannot even choose its own chief executive.

One insider admitted that the saga was bound to be closely followed by other big six accountancy firms that have long envied Andersen's apparent effortless ability to grow strongly even at times of recession, but was not concerning clients.



Turned down: Jim Wadia, head of the UK operation

## Warning hits Intrum shares

Cathy Newman

The share price of Intrum Justitia, the largest debt collection business in Europe, plunged by almost 27 per cent yesterday after the company issued a profits warning.

Intrum's shares dropped from 125.5p to 92p at the close of trading, after the company said its first half profits would come in at around two-thirds of last year's level of £8.2m. Full year profit would also be below expectations, the company said.

The company said that the UK's emergence from the recession had reduced the opportunities available to debt collectors. In Intrum's French and German operations, the sluggish economy had caused problems. The strength of sterling also contributed to the difficulties.

Pressures on trading would be eased if the Government introduced legislation to allow creditors a statutory right to interest on debt, the company added. John Langhorn, UK group managing director, said

he was much more confident of new laws now that Labour was in power.

He added: "The market place has been very tough for some time, which is a feature of the fact that there are too many collection agencies chasing not enough work."

He said that in the UK the company had also been hampered by changing too little for the difficulty of the work. However, he added: "We're being much more selective about the work we're taking on. We've got to stop being busy fools and we've got to take on contracts at the right prices."

Intrum is seeking improvements in its consumer division by appointing a new managing director. The previous managing director, Peter Wilson, resigned earlier this year.

In France, Intrum is optimistic of changing its fortunes with the recent acquisition of GRC, a French debt collector. Meanwhile, in Germany, the arrival last April of a new managing director, Joachim Ost, is expected to improve the situation.







# Keeping it simple works for Asda

## THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY MAGNUS GRIMOND

Judging by yesterday's results from Asda, Archie Norman, its part-time chairman, has plenty of time to take on the lost causes of the Tory party.

Things at Asda are rolling along just fine. The store group's brightly sales growth last year adds credence to its claims that sticking to "simple shopkeeping" and low prices rather than branching out into costly unknowns like banking is a sound strategy.

Asda's like-for-like sales growth at 9.2 per cent certainly outshines Sainsbury's 3.2 per cent. With practically no inflation over the last six months, most of that has been pure volume.

Of course Asda is still catching up with more mature peers, but its former "disaster" tag is now a distant memory. With players like Kwik Save weakening, the group continues to pinch market share, taking another 1.1 percentage points to reach 11 per cent last year.

The group is also benefiting from what it calls "very different" stores. For one thing, Asda's shops are bigger, at around 45,000-55,000 square feet compared to around 27,000 for Tesco and Sainsbury, giving it more space to devote to higher growth non-groceries.

The "George" clothing brand has been a particular success, with toddler and baby wear sales up 32 per cent compared to just 2 per cent for the market. Volume sales per square foot are as good as Next or Marks & Spencer, but with half the labour and distribution costs, Asda can afford to sell clothes at 20 per cent below high street prices. The group reckons it can double its clothing sales - currently 5 per cent of turnover - to £800m in a few years and increase its share of the children's clothes market from 7 to 10 per cent by the year end.

There are concerns. One is that without a major move into branded services like banking and even a loyalty card (though that is likely to come) the group may suffer in the longer term. The issue is pertinent now that Archie Norman, who has been so effective in promoting the Asda name through headline-grabbing campaigns on the net book agreement and aspirin prices, will be spending more time in Parliament and less in Asda's boardroom.

The jury is still out on the new management. Equally, Asda may not have the hypermarket sector to itself if Tesco begins expanding in that area. Meanwhile it is getting harder for the group to expand, given the lack of greenfield sites in the south, where it is still not well represented and land

### Waste paper a drag on BPB

The cynics will say it was more than fortuitous that BPB, Europe's highest plasterboard group, should choose last year to move to average from year-end exchange rates. The £10.3m boost to profits provided by the accounting change neutralised a £10m downturn at the group's recycled paper operation, which chalked up a £3m deficit in the year to March. As a result, group profits before exceptional gains of £14.3m rose 9.4 per cent to £17.5m last year, a growth rate that would have been more like 3 per cent without the change.

But that is probably unfair to BPB, which has turned in a very respectable performance against a dire European building materials market over the past

two years or so. The paper problems, caused by a slump in prices, ferocious competition made worse by the pound's strength and a plant breakdown, are set to continue for six months at least.

The business is back to break-even, helped by a recovery in prices, and BPB is moving to cut costs and capacity, with two plants being sold or closed and another under review. But even so, the drag caused by waste paper means analysts are not expecting the plasterboard division as a whole to rise above last year's £13.4m profits, down a quarter on the previous year.

That said, the main plasterboard to insulation products building materials division put in another strong underlying performance. Operating profit was up 7.8 per cent to £15.3m or 15 per cent when currency effects are stripped out. Plasterboard sales volumes up 8 per cent compared with other building materials groups and, although a price rise in November has not stuck, divisional margins fattened by 1 point to 13.1 per cent.

More price rises are in store for September and the first £5m of the expected £10m annual cost savings from the £53m state-of-the-art plasterboard

plant in Berlin should kick in this year. So the fundamentals remain intact at BPB. Plasterboard consumption in Europe has a long way to catch up with US levels and profits of £185m remain in sight for the current year, putting the shares, down 2p at 333p, on a forward p/e ratio of 14. Fair value.

### GUS will take some waking up

When Lord Wolfson of Sunningdale took the helm at Great Universal Stores from his cousin last September, he was charged with reawakening the sleeping catalogue giant. That is easier said than done. Pre-tax profits, ignoring exceptional VAT refunds, fell 2 per cent to £54.9m in the year to March. To be fair, the strength of the pound more than accounted for this slump, wiping nearly £22m off the bottom line. But that cannot disguise the fact that home shopping profits tumbled from £187m to £158m.

GUS's core agency catalogue business is in sad decline. Its customers are being lured by the plethora of out-of-town stores springing up all around the country. Retail chains such as Next are also rapidly expanding their own mail order businesses. Wolfson admits GUS was guilty of neglecting service by cutting costs to the bone and is now splashing out on more staff to remedy the problem, but agency profits look set to fall further.

Consequently GUS has decided to cut out the middle man or woman and develop a direct mail order business, using its extensive database to target customers and then send appropriate catalogues straight to their homes. But the initiative is only in its early stages and will not be a major contributor for some years. At least Experian and Direct Marketing Technology, its two new US acquisitions which provide customer information for credit card and retail companies, should boost earnings in the current year.

The shares fell 41.5p to 623.5p yesterday as analysts rushed to slash current year profit forecasts on home shopping fears. Estimates had ranged from around £600m to £625m, but the broker SGST is now looking for profits of £575m, before any further tax credit, putting the shares on a prospective multiple of 16. That still looks a full rating, even after the sharp fall in the share price.

# Fashion victims, look out for the clothes police

## PEOPLE & BUSINESS



No dummy: George Davies sold his company to Asda

Perhaps it's something to do with Archie Norman going off to be chairman of the Conservative Party, traditionally the party of law and order. Asda, where Mr Norman is non-executive chairman, is launching its own "clothes police".

The supermarket group has declared a clothing amnesty and is sending its police into its stores to "arrest" people who pay over the odds for fashion.

Asda operatives yesterday unveiled a life-size cardboard cut-out of George Davies, the former head of Next, wearing a "clothes police" cap and T-shirt. After leaving Next Mr Davies built up and sold his own company, The George Davies Partnership, to Asda, which now markets the George range of clothing.

Journalists and analysts were presented with ties and scarves from the George range. The writers packed their booty away while the analysts donned their ties immediately. Yet another example of City short-termism.

Mr Norman was reluctant to answer questions on the election, saying: "We don't want to get depressed. This is a story about success."

Significantly perhaps, every Asda member of staff was wearing a first-person name badge - except Mr Norman. Mentally, he's already in Smith Square.

Here's a joke doing the rounds at Goldman Sachs: There's a rumour that Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, is going to impose a national insurance surcharge on six-figure "fat cat" bonuses. Goldmans, however, is very relaxed about it. According to an insider: "It doesn't affect us. It would only hit it if it was seven figures."

Lord Forte has put his splendid pile in Ripley, Surrey, up for sale. I hear. The extensive estate includes

Water are now off the hook." To which Mr Byatt replied: "It's not just Thames Water. I wake up on a weekend when it's raining with a spring in my step."

Lord Rothschild is going to have even more time to decide how to spend the National Lottery money, as he is retiring as a director of St James's Place Capital, the financial group he built with Mark Weinberg.

But he's still heavily involved with the group, as he is becoming president of SJPC. He has found that chairing the committee which decides where the lottery millions should go has become a far more time-consuming and onerous task than was anticipated.

Lord Rothschild has another nine months to go on the lottery committee and Mr Weinberg says he's

"enormously busy with it". At the same time there are other boardroom changes stemming from the plan, announced several months ago, for J Rothschild Assurance Holdings (JRAH) to become a wholly-owned subsidiary of SJPC. SJPC said William Wellesley was to resign as a director, while Michael Wilson, chief executive of JRAH, would become an executive director of SJPC.

The Freight Transport Association can announce a technological triumph - it has invented time travel. That is the only explanation for a press release which has just appeared on my desk. "Chancellor Brown's Budget; 2 July 1997. Transport. Either Dr Who has joined the FTA or Peter Mandelson has one hell of a leak to track down.

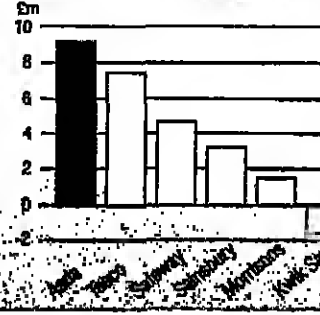
John Wilcock

### Asda: At a glance

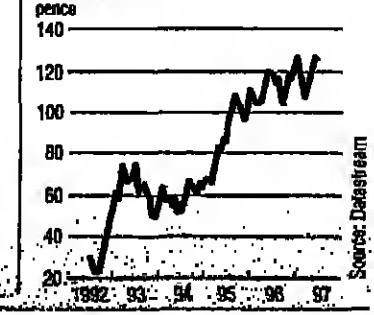
Market value: £3.71bn, share price 125.75p

Trading record	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Turnover (£bn)	4.61	4.82	5.29	6.04	6.95
Pre-tax profits (£m)	187	(126)	257	312	405
Earnings per share (p)	6.40	(6.91)	6.16	7.98	10.86
Dividends per share (p)	1.58	1.76	2.20	2.65	3.05

### Like for like sales growth



### Share price



### Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-Mark	1 month	3 months
US	1.6682	14.12	42.59	100	1.5785	1.5785
Canada	2.2989	69.68	203.67	100	0.7862	0.7862
Germany	2.2989	69.68	203.67	100	0.7862	0.7862
France	97.98	265.27	825.799	100	16.16	39.38
Italy	28148	0.2	2.2	100	16.16	39.38
Spain	16986	30.29	96.42	100	16.16	39.38
Belgium	35.439	85.45	252.501	100	16.16	39.38
Netherlands	100.277	288	862.889	100	16.16	39.38
Sweden	13.02	4.3	15.12	100	16.16	39.38
Switzerland	2.2989	69.68	203.67	100	0.7862	0.7862
Australia	2.2989	69.68	203.67	100	0.7862	0.7862
Japan	2.2989	69.68	203.67	100	0.7862	0.7862
South Korea	2.2989	69.68	203.67	100	0.7862	0.7862
Singapore	2.2989	69.68	203.67	100	0.7862	0.7862

### Other Spot Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-Mark	1 month	3 months
Argentina	1.0895	0.9988	0.9988	100	0.9988	0.9988
Australia	2.2989	69.68	203.67	100	0.7862	0.7862
Brazil	1.7940	1.0764	1.0764	100	1.0764	1.0764
Canada	2.2989	69.68	203.67	100	0.7862	0.7862
France	97.98	265.27	825.799	100	16.16	39.38
Germany	2.2989	69.68	203.67	100	0.7862	0.7862
Italy	28148	0.2	2.2	100	16.16	39.38
Japan	2.2989	69.68	203.67	100	0.7862	0.7862
South Korea	2.2989	69.68	203.67	100	0.7862	0.7862
Singapore	2.2989	69.68	203.67	100	0.7862	0.7862

### Interest Rates

Country	Rate	Country	Rate	Country	Rate
UK	6.50%	Germany	2.50%	US	6.50%
France	3.00%	Canada	4.75%	Japan	0.50%
Italy	4.00%	Spain	4.00%	Belgium	2.50%
Sweden	4.00%	Denmark	2.50%	Switzerland	1.00%
Netherlands	2.50%	Portugal	10.00%	Australia	6.00%
South Korea	6.00%	India	10.00%	China	6.00%
Singapore	6.00%	Malaysia	6.00%	Indonesia	6.00%

### Bond Yields

Country	Yield	Country	Yield	Country	Yield
UK	7.0%	Germany	2.5%	US	6.5%
France	3.0%	Canada	4.7%	Japan	0.5%
Italy	4.0%	Spain	4.0%	Belgium	2.5%
Sweden	4.0%	Denmark	2.5%	Switzerland	1.0%
Netherlands	2.5%	Portugal	10.0%	Australia	6.0%
South Korea	6.0%	India	10.0%	China	6.0%
Singapore	6.0%	Malaysia	6.0%	Indonesia	6.0%

### Money Market Rates

Country	Rate	Country	Rate	Country	Rate
UK	6.50%	Germany	2.50%	US	6.50%
France	3.00%	Canada	4.75%	Japan	0.50%
Italy	4.00%	Spain	4.00%	Belgium	2.50%
Sweden	4.00%	Denmark	2.50%	Switzerland	1.00%
Netherlands	2.50%	Portugal	10.00%	Australia	6.00%
South Korea	6.00%	India	10.00%	China	6.00%
Singapore	6.00%	Malaysia	6.00%	Indonesia	6.00%

### Tourist Rates

Country	Rate	Country	Rate	Country	Rate
UK	6.50%	Germany	2.50%	US	6.50%
France	3.00%	Canada	4.75%	Japan	0.50%
Italy	4.00%	Spain	4.00%	Belgium	2.50%
Sweden	4.00%	Denmark	2.50%	Switzerland	1.00%
Netherlands	2.50%	Portugal	10.00%	Australia	6.00%
South Korea	6.00%	India	10.00%	China	6.00%
Singapore	6.00%	Malaysia	6.00%	Indonesia	6.00%

### Liffe Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open	Close
Long Gilt	114.11	114.11	114.00	114.00
Short Gilt	114.11	114.11	114.00	114.00
Long Euro	114.11	114.11	114.00	114.00
Short Euro	114.11	114.11	114.00	114.00

### Liffe FTSE 100 Index Option

Series	Settlement	High/Low	Open	Close
Long	4000	4000	4000	4000
Short	4000	4000	4000	4000

### Energy

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open	Close
Long Oil	114.11	114.11	114.00	114.00
Short Oil	114.11	114.11	114.00	114.00

### Commodity Indices

Index	Settlement	High/Low	Open	Close
Long	4000	4000	4000	4000
Short	4000	4000	4000	4000

### Industrial Metals

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open	Close
Long	4000	4000	4000	4000
Short	4000	4000	4000	4000

### Precious Metals

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open	Close
Long	4000	4000	4000	4000
Short	4000	4000	4000	4000

### Agricultural

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open	Close
Long	4000	4000	4000	4000
Short	4000	4000	4000	4000

### Other Softs

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open	Close
Long	4000	4000	4000	4000
Short	4000	4000	4000	4000

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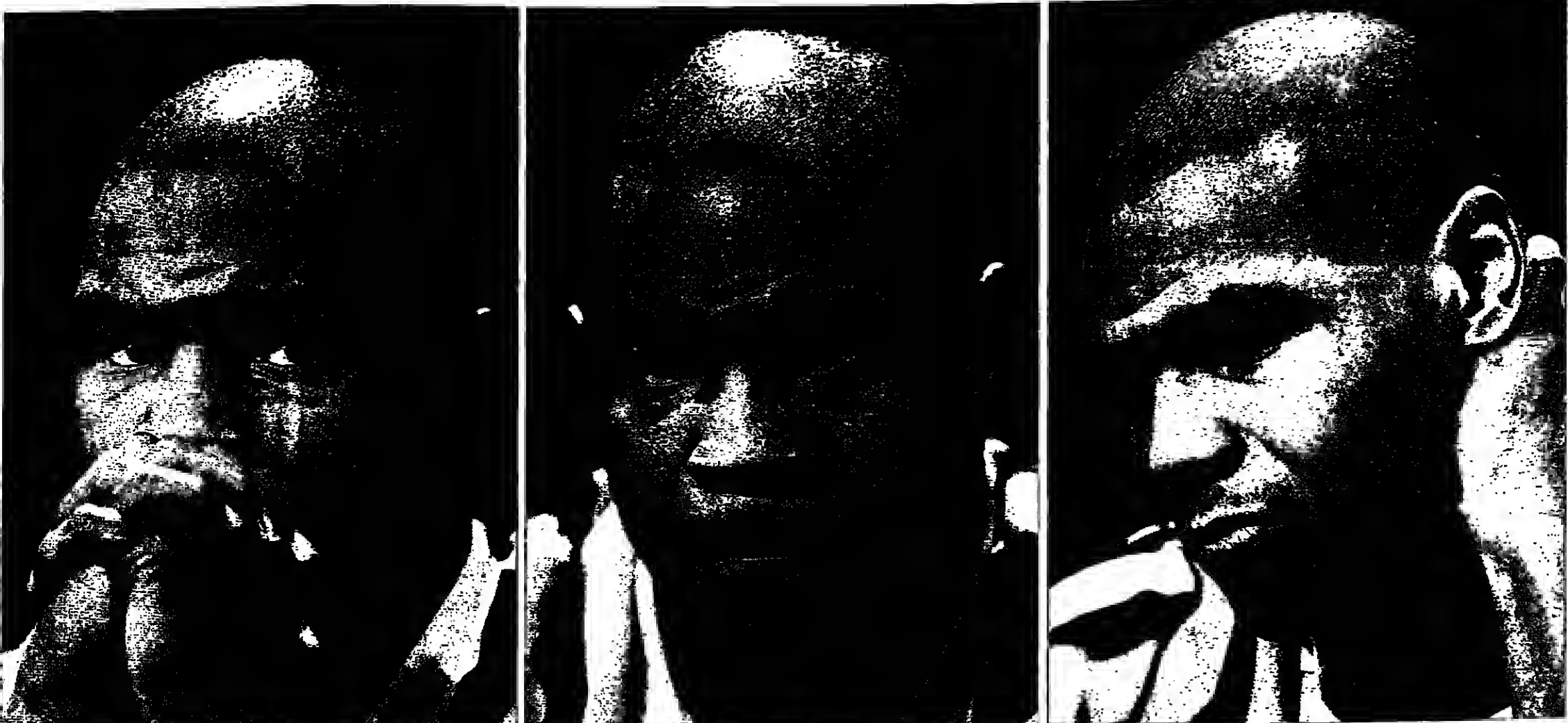
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## sport

## Tyson troubled by onslaught of doubt



Mind game: Mike Tyson's tortured mien at a press conference in Las Vegas earlier this week hints at the inner turmoil which may undermine his heavyweight title challenge

Photograph: Gary Hershorn/Reuters

More attention should have been paid to the twists and turns of a long conversation Mike Tyson had with reporters last November, shortly before Evander Holyfield stopped him in 11 rounds for the World Boxing Association heavyweight championship.

With hindsight there was enough in Tyson's demeanour to suggest not only serious disregard for Holyfield's warrior instinct but an erosion of the grim purpose that had spread terror throughout the division.

If technical shortcomings and neglectful preparation contributed to Tyson's downfall there was also a sense of uncertainty. It lingers, and Tyson's claimed commitment to family life, the emphasis he places on the future well-being of his children, may be as relevant to the outcome of tomorrow's rematch here as the results of attempted improvement.

At this stage of his career Tyson may well be in conflict with the inner man, troubled by maturity, at odds with the primitive instinct that was central to his violent progress in the ring. Where Tyson once scorned the possibility of defeat he now accepts that Holyfield could beat him again. "If it happens I'll carry on fighting," he told friends and close associates this week. "It would not be the end for me."

Maybe not, but those are not the words of a man still committed to the rough and tumble of prize-fighting. They are those of a man who asks questions of himself. "Sometimes I wonder why I am doing this," he said, "but what else is there? Even now, after all I have been through, I don't know exactly what I want to do. I enjoy my kids and I want to make a difference with them. My children are all I have. It [family life] is relatively new to me. Wives are human, they may run off with

The outcome of tomorrow's world heavyweight title bout may hinge on the state of mind of a challenger whose powers of intimidation are waning, writes Ken Jones from Las Vegas

other people. But you have to take care of your children. They are always there. I'm glad that I have them at this stage of my life, because they are at an age when they really don't know what goes on in this business. "My children know what I do. But I think of it as their future. Every time I get into the ring it helps their future. Every fight means a different future for them. They cried when I lost to Holyfield. But they saw I was OK, so they didn't trip up on that too much."

Tyson's mentor, Cus D'Amato, is still around in the form of memory. "Cus was a great emotional teacher," he said. "We learned from him not to take anything personally as far as the job was concerned. This is our life. We have much more

than boxing. I believe that boxing is the best sport in the world, but I can't get caught up in defeats, because that is what life is all about."

No longer true to a formula of establishing superiority through intimidation, Tyson is unquestionably less of a force than he was, and the feeling grows that Holyfield has his measure.

Doubts may be crowding in on Tyson as they do on practically everyone who is required to arrive at a conclusion about the contest. Holyfield's apparent confidence, the coolness he exhibited on Wednesday when speaking at a press conference attended by hundreds of media representatives, has become important in the reckoning. But for many of us it still comes

back to the true state of Tyson's mind and whether the return of Richie Giachetti as trainer has brought about improvements in technique and attitude.

In that respect there is very little to go on but the careless words of a sparring partner may prove significant. "Today, Mike was good," he said yesterday. "I don't want to pretend to know them. The people I care about know me. All the media has done is hurt me and my family."

Tyson's past rises up before him. Scandal after scandal culminating in conviction for rape and a prison sentence. He speaks of being ripped off by lawyers and conned by a group who took \$250,000 for the construction of a mosque and then left town with the money. "No one knows me. What has hap-

pened in my life makes me the person I am. I'm the only one who knows me. I've been taken advantage of all my life. I've been abused. I've been dehumanised. I've been humiliated. I've been betrayed. And I'm still angry and bitter about it. But you can't progress unless you let that go. It keeps you sharp to be revengeful but it also keeps you broke. History proves that the only person in boxing who really struggles is the fighter."

What Tyson appears to be struggling for is a renewal of the powers that made most of his contests a foregone conclusion. Nevada boxing officials are to hold an emergency meeting to consider a protest by Tyson's camp over the appointment of Mitch Halpern as referee, because of his handling of the first fight against Holyfield last November. The commission has been told that Tyson was upset over Halpern's handling of head butts in the fight.

## Bullen earns official approval

Equestrianism  
GENEVIEVE MURPHY  
reports from Burge

Sarah Bullen held the lead after yesterday's first day of dressage in the international two-star section of the Macallan International Horse Trials here in Moray. Her test on the seven-year-old stallion Rock King was so good that the ground jury sent a message to congratulate her on her superb dressage.

Bullen would have ridden the stallion at Windsor, but she is the organiser of that event and knew it would be impossible to ride there as well. So she has made the long journey to ride her horse at this northernmost three-day event in Britain.

Bullen overtook Darrell Scalfie, who had held the lead on the grey mare Faerie Dazzler. "The last time I was in the lead here after the dressage, I fell at the last cross-country fence so I don't know that it bodes well," said Scalfie before he was overtaken.

Scalfie rode the seven-year-old at Windsor in May, but she struck into herself on the cross-country and had to be pulled up. "She is still quite green, so we thought we'd give her a jolly in Scotland," Scalfie said.

Chris Barrie, the long-time leader, is now equal third on Oscar—who will, he reckons, face a tough test in tomorrow's cross-country. Yesterday's scudding clouds brought some heavy showers and some stretches of ground (particularly the puddle-like uphill climb after fence five) will make it a test of stamina as well as jumping.

Terry Boon, who is leading in the national two-star section on Into Overdrive, is equally well aware that the course will be a serious test of fitness. His 10-year-old mount, who show jumped for 10 years before turning to eventing this spring, has a wonderful record so far having won his first six events in his new discipline.

"He has enough scope for jumping the fences," Boon said. "He also has a big stride and is able to get into a rhythm and keep it." These should prove useful attributes tomorrow.

Results, Digest, page 29

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## Ilott revels in swing conditions

## Cricket

HENRY BLOFIELD  
reports from Southend  
Derbyshire 142; Essex 157-2

Southchurch Park was a bleak enough spot for most people as the cold wind blew fiercely all day, but one man who will have enjoyed it was Mark Ilott. Bowling from the Northumberland Road end, he had swept aside the Derbyshire batting by mid-afternoon, taking 7 for 59.

It was raining just about everywhere else in England, but for some strange reason this corner of Essex was fairly dry.

The pitch was green, the ball swung and moved off the seam and batting was a precarious business until Stuart Law played as only he can on a damp, unwellcoming evening.

Philip DeFreitas won the toss and decided to bat, although the surface had that look about it which would have prompted a fair number of captains to field first. Ilott was able to swing the ball nastily back into the right hander.

It was evidence of this that four of his right-handed victims went out leg before. Bowling left arm over the wicket, he would have had to have brought the ball back into the bat if he was to get

an lbw decision in his favour. In these conditions and at this level, Ilott can be a giant; on bland Test pitches against better batting, he has not found it so easy.

He began Derbyshire's downfall in his third over. Matthew Vandrau came forward to the third ball and, playing no stroke, was lbw. Two balls later, Chris Adams tried to drive through the off side and was caught behind.

For a time, there was solid resistance from Adrian Rollins, but after a shower had claimed five overs, he drove at Ashley Cowan and was picked up low and with ease by his brother, Robert, behind the wicket for Essex.

After a flourish by DeFreitas at the end, the Derbyshire innings ended in the 48th over. Devon Malcolm, who had helped him add 28 for the last wicket, limped off after being struck on the left foot by Ilott. An X-ray showed only bruising, although he did not field, let alone bowl.

Essex soon lost Graham Gooch, who cannot find his touch, and Darren Robinson. This let in Law, who began to bat as if the pitch was the best in the world. A succession of glorious strokes flowed off his bat, and he reached 50 in 9 balls with eight fours and found a resourceful partner in Paul Pritchard, who also reached 50.

## Rain pulls plug on floodlit Oval

DAVID LLEWELLYN

Floodlit cricket certainly came to The Oval last night. Around the flooded outfield, pools of water, which had formed following a day of torrential rain, glistened under £40,000-worth of lighting which was to have brought one-day cricket in England out of the dark ages.

The weather deterred the hoped-for thousands of fans from attending what was to have been the first AXA Life Sunday League match staged under lights in this country.

As the Surrey and Nottinghamshire players kicked their heels in the dressing-room the match was abandoned, and officials were left counting the cost of trying to put on so ambitious a show, given the fickleness of the weather in this country.

"We never set out for this to be a financial bonanza," Paul

Sheldon, the Surrey chief executive, said, "we merely wanted to pioneer something new. It was always intended to be a break-even operation."

The costs of between £80,000-£100,000 were covered either by sponsorship for the lights, or through the club's insurance scheme.

"So much effort has gone into this from the behind-the-scenes people and it's not fair that we couldn't be given a chance even to get started," the Surrey manager, David Gilbert, said.

With forecasts of further rain overnight the club feared that the Oval outfield would be damaged when the mobile cranes used to erect the lights moved off the waterlogged turf. Australia's hopes of match practice before next week's third Test against England were thwarted for a second successive day at The Parks as play against British Universities was again washed out.

CRICKET SCOREBOARD			
<b>Britannic Assurance County Championship</b>			
First day of play today, 11.0			
<b>Essex v Derbyshire</b>			
SOUTHEND: Essex (4pts) are 15 runs ahead of Derbyshire (0) with eight first-innings wickets standing.			
Derbyshire won toss.			
Derbyshire - First Innings			
M. Vandrau b Ilott	5		
C. Adams c Rollins b Ilott	5		
A. Rollins b Ilott	5		
J. E. O'Brien c Cowan b Ilott	5		
V.P. Clarke b Ilott	5		
P.A. DeFreitas c Cowan b Ilott	5		
M. Ilott b Ilott	5		
P. Pritchard b Ilott	5		
D. Robinson b Ilott	5		
S. Law b Ilott	5		
Extras (b1, b5, w2, nb2)	10		
Total (17.4 overs)	10		
Fall: 1-5, 2-9, 3-17, 4-25, 5-31, 6-31, 7-39, 8-114, 9-141.			
Bowling: Ilott 19-9-59; 7; Cowan 18-4-5-46; 3; Pritchard 18-0-10; 1; Scalfie 5-0-13-0.			
<b>Essex - First Innings</b>			
G. Gooch c Rollins b Adams	7		
D. J. Richardson c Adams b Adams	7		
S. D. Law not out	69		
M. Ilott not out	6		
Total (10.4 overs)	89		
Fall: 1-2, 2-21.			
To bat: R. Gooch, A. P. Cowan, D. J. Richardson, M. Ilott, A. P. Cowan, P. M. Such.			
Bowling: DeFreitas 18-1-50-0; Adams 18-5-60-2; Clarke 5-0-20-0; Law 5-0-27-0.			
Umpires: S. J. Meyer and J. H. Harris.			
<b>Gloucestershire v Sussex</b>			
SWANSEA: Gloucestershire (10pts) are 114 for 5 in their first innings against Sussex (0).			
Sussex won toss.			
Gloucestershire - First Innings			
P. J. Parsons c Adams b Harris	48		
A. Dale c Moore b Harris	11		
M. J. Harrison c Adams b Robinson	15		
P. A. Colley b Harris	15		
P. O. Collins not out	22		
H. O. Shaw not out	4		
Extras (b2, nb1)	4		
Total (for 30.4 overs)	114		

ON WEDNESDAY IT WAS THEM.			
Draw date: 25/6/97. The winning numbers: 12, 17, 27, 28, 38, 40. Bonus number: 6.			
Total Sales: £26,267,888. Prize Fund: £13,427,349 (45% of ticket sales plus £1,608,799 Superdraw funding).			
CATEGORY	NO. OF WINNERS	AMOUNT FOR EACH WINNER	TOTAL EACH TIER
Match 6 (Jackpot)	3	£1,566,567	£5,000,001
Match 5 plus bonus ball	21	£49,717	£1,044,057
Match 5	510	£1,279	£652,290
Match 4	28,515	£50	£1,425,750
Match 3	629,816	£10	£6,298,160
TOTALS	958,565		£13,417,258

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Breakage prizes rounded down to nearest £1: £10,051

THE NATIONAL LOTTERY







## sport

## WIMBLEDON 97

## Strawberry relief for Pierce

Guy Hodgson on the hard time the players have when the rain falls



Great life a tennis player: sun, seeds and as much sponsored gear as you can wear. Then again you spend a lot of days watching the rain fall. What do you do at Wimbledon if you reach the point of no return? In Mary Pierce's case you hand out strawberries.

The Women's Tennis Association tried hard yesterday, sending Pierce and Mary Joe Fernandez into the press canteen to provide a photo-opportunity. On a wet day at the All England Club it was a trifle the media consumed with relish. It cut the tedium for the players as well.

Stan Smith, when he talks about a career that included becoming men's champion in 1972, said the worst thing about being a tennis pro is the waiting. "You have to eat to keep up the energy levels but you can't afford to have a meal just before you go on court. It can drive you crazy finding something to do." Some players like Martina Navratilova built their lives round their diet, some days that life goes haywire.

Stefan Edberg thought he had finished with the waiting game. In 1991 he played the longest match of his career at Wimbledon when he started against Marc Rosset on Monday and finished it on Thursday. Yesterday the champion of 1988 and 1990 was due to receive a memento from the Duke of Kent to mark "his immense contribution to the game". Instead he took a rain check.

Rachel McQuillan's day in the limelight was typical of a day amid the storms. In theory Wednesday should have been among the greatest in her career. In theory, she was due to make her debut on Centre Court to play Monica Seles at 2pm but did not get there until four hours later.

"I just tried to keep busy," the Australian said of her wait problem. "because I didn't want to get tired. The players' lounge gets pretty congested and hot and the talk in the locker-room is 'we're not going to play today'. You start thinking about tomorrow when, all of a sudden, you're on court."

You spend hours waiting and suddenly you are not prepared. McQuillan thought she had run everything through her mind but had forgotten where she was and had to ask her opponent for the etiquette. "Where do we curtsy," she asked as the Royal Box came into view. "Service line." Seles hissed. "I'm going. Service line." I'll just wait for you.

McQuillan dipped in time and bowed pretty quickly too, losing the first set in 19 minutes and the match 0-6, 0-2. Even that had its interruption



Star kept waiting: Venus Williams, who has had her first-round match delayed by the weather since Monday

Photograph: PA

and time for a trip to the locker-room. "The girls were saying 'Rach, you're playing a good match there' which made me more nervous. They said 'I like what you did when you won that game'."

Sarcasm, gossip and a whole lot of time-wasting. Tennis players do what any of us would do if they have hours

to spare. Tim Henman is partial to a game of backgammon while Goran Ivankovic plays cards with his coach and friend from his schooldays, Vedran Martić.

If possible the Croat will team up with Martić against his parents. "We play an Italian game, briscola," he said last year, "and my father is pretty ex-

perienced. It's a big battle of pride and we are losing all the time. There are all sorts of signs which you are not allowed to do in this game: a little cheating you know. My father doesn't know we are cheating but it doesn't help. I don't like to lose at cards. The other night they beat us pretty badly and I couldn't sleep."

Ah, sleep. That's another option and one that Pierce and Fernandez probably wished they had taken when they were chased around the canteen by a horde of hungry hacks. How had they spent their day? "Listening to music and playing cards." It could have been any two of a thousand people at Wimbledon talking.

## Williams' debut washed out

Venus Williams, the American teenager wearing her trademark hair beads in the All England Club colours, made it only as far as the practice courts yesterday at her first Wimbledon as the rain continued to fall.

Williams, 17, sporting hundreds of purple and green beads which had taken more than five hours to braid on one by one, has had her first-round match delayed by the weather since Monday.

Desperate to find her touch on grass, she took advantage of a short break between showers to knock up for 30 minutes on the practice courts before yet more rain forced her back under cover.

After having her bag searched by security staff, track-suited Williams, whose beads are normally a brilliant white, showed off her powerful ground-strokes as her younger sister Serena and mother Oracene looked on.

A large crowd also built up around the court to watch the oft-tall player competing in only her second Grand Slam tournament but who has already secured a £3m contract with sponsors Reebok.

Ranked world No 59 and having played in only 15 professional

events, she has been propelled to relative stardom because of her appearance and background, as well as her potential.

Born and brought up in Compton, a crime-ridden neighbourhood of Los Angeles, she and Serena were once forced to dive for cover on a local court when two rival gangs started firing guns at each other.

The girls flung themselves to the ground in fright before running back home to their parents who, now their daughter is a millionaire, have moved to the more plush surroundings of Palm Beach, Florida.

Williams, who normally

wears a stunning silver-grey outfit on court, is sure to be a star attraction when she finally starts her match against Magdalena Grzybowska of Poland. But her hair-beads could cause her a headache as there have been previous occasions when some of the beads have fallen out during matches.

Williams has been warned that if this happens at Wimbledon, she could be breaking tournament rules. Regulations state that if loose objects, such as a spare ball, drop from a player's person during a rally, the point must be replayed. A second offence would mean an

official warning, while a third infringement could lead to the deduction of a point.

Another rule problem some observers believe Williams could face is due to the loud noise her beads make when they rattle together as she runs. Former British No 1 Jo Durie said the noise had been described as sounding like "someone shaking a money box", adding it could be off-putting for her opponent.

Although rule 25, which covers hindrance of another player, could encompass the noise, there are no examples of the rule having been enforced.

Williams' father, Richard, who is also her coach, has not travelled to Wimbledon with the rest of the family as he is committed to his work with underprivileged children back home.

The player's lack of professional experience so far has been due to his strong belief she should not do too much too soon, and that her education must take priority over tennis.

Although she has only had a few hours' experience on grass and lost in the second round of the French Open to Nathalie Tauziat, in March she beat the winner of that tournament, Croatia's Iva Majoli.

## Court circular

## Devon still No 1 for women

Cream, teas, holiday beaches and a breeding ground for star tennis players. We are talking Devon and in the last instance certainly we are speaking in relative terms. Besides all its other charms, the seaside county boasts a remarkable record for producing women players good enough to make a decent living out of the game.

In the case of Sue Barker it proved a pretty decent living indeed. The 1976 French champion and Wimbledon semi-finalist the following year, Sue hailed from Paignton. Before her on the honours board came Angela Mortimer, out of Torquay and a Wimbledon winner in 1961.

For a long time Corinna Mulsworth, another Torquay girl, held the distinction of the last British woman to qualify for The Championships and win a round there. That was in 1979 and on Tuesday the achieve-

ment was at last matched by Karen Cross, 23, and, somewhat inevitably, from Exeter.

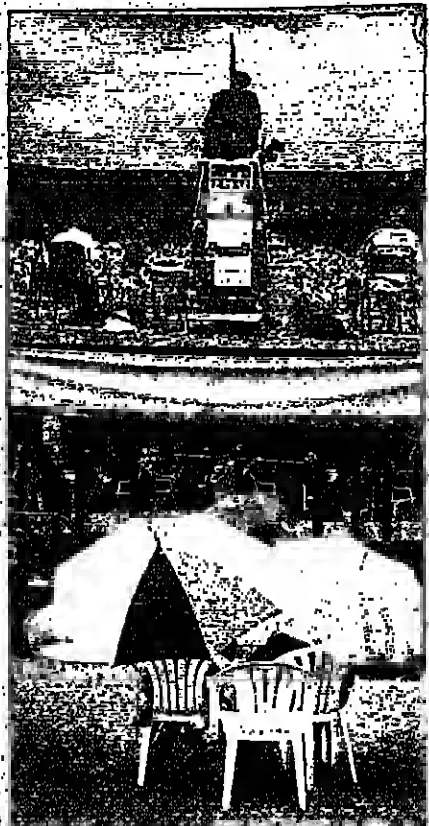
Also from Exeter comes Lucie Ahl, born just five months later and in a neighbouring village to Karen. She is still waiting to complete her first-round match here.

The list goes on. There was also Sara Gomer, Jo Louis, Valda Lake and before them Jackie Fayer, all Wimbledon players and all West Country Wonders.

"Obviously the home counties have produced their fair share of players but, of the others, Devon is streets ahead as a producer of talent," the Lawn Tennis Association's press officer, Nick Imison, said.

There is no obvious explanation, it just seems to be one of those coincidental things. But Devon has had some influential coaches like Arthur Roberts who was a mentor for both Angela Mortimer and Sue Barker.

Parasol party: Wimbledon revellers take a rain-check while the 1990 final between Stefan Edberg and Boris Becker is shown on the giant screen above



Photograph: David Aspin

## Officials wary of those who bare all

The spectre of the streaker looms over this Wimbledon. Melissa Johnson, a blonde 23-year-old student, made a name for herself before last year's men's final between Richard Krajicek and Mali Washington when she cavorted on the Centre Court, sans nearly everything, and gave the lie to the belief that tennis players are so focused that they are blissfully unaware of anything else going on.

Wimbledon was braced for more trouble this week when Carlos Moya, a Spaniard who enjoys a great deal of female support, was the focus of some attention from two particularly

striking ladies in matching white frocks. So insistent was their pleading with Moya's coach, Josep Perlas, to speak to the player on their behalf that he was eventually forced to move his court-side seat.

The authorities have given consideration to how best to prevent a repeat of Johnson's frolics. She was detained by the police but quickly released, with Wimbledon noting that, at the end of a rain-affected week, she had provided "light amusement for our loyal and patient supporters who have had a trying time during the recent bad weather."

"They do have a heart after all."

## THE NUMBERS GAME

3 The number of sets to which the early rounds of the men's doubles has been reduced.

100 The number of backlogged matches.

1 The times play has taken place on the middle Sunday.

0 What spectators paid to watch on that Sunday in 1991.

## TODAY'S WEATHER

Cloud with more rain expected. Maximum temp 15C

## Game set and watch.

ROLEX

OFFICIAL TIMEKEEPER TO THE CHAMPIONSHIPS WIMBLEDON

DEEDS OF THE SEEDS											
Men's singles						Women's singles					
Holder: Richard Krajicek (Netherlands)						Holder: Steffi Graf (Germany)					
1 SAMPRAS	2 MANISSEVIC	3 CHANG	4 RYDER	5 RYDER	6 RYDER	1 BURGESS	2 SELES	3 NOVOTNA	4 MANJOLI	5 BURGESS	6 BURGESS
7 RYDER	8 RYDER	9 RYDER	10 RYDER	11 RYDER	12 RYDER	7 BURGESS	8 BURGESS	9 BURGESS	10 BURGESS	11 BURGESS	12 BURGESS
13 RYDER	14 RYDER	15 RYDER	16 RYDER	17 RYDER	18 RYDER	13 BURGESS	14 BURGESS	15 BURGESS	16 BURGESS	17 BURGESS	18 BURGESS
19 RYDER	20 RYDER	21 RYDER	22 RYDER	23 RYDER	24 RYDER	19 BURGESS	20 BURGESS	21 BURGESS	22 BURGESS	23 BURGESS	24 BURGESS
25 RYDER	26 RYDER	27 RYDER	28 RYDER	29 RYDER	30 RYDER	25 BURGESS	26 BURGESS	27 BURGESS	28 BURGESS	29 BURGESS	30 BURGESS
31 RYDER	32 RYDER	33 RYDER	34 RYDER	35 RYDER	36 RYDER	31 BURGESS	32 BURGESS	33 BURGESS	34 BURGESS	35 BURGESS	36 BURGESS
37 RYDER	38 RYDER	39 RYDER	40 RYDER	41 RYDER	42 RYDER	37 BURGESS	38 BURGESS	39 BURGESS	40 BURGESS	41 BURGESS	42 BURGESS
43 RYDER	44 RYDER	45 RYDER	46 RYDER	47 RYDER	48 RYDER	43 BURGESS	44 BURGESS	45 BURGESS	46 BURGESS	47 BURGESS	48 BURGESS
49 RYDER	50 RYDER	51 RYDER	52 RYDER	53 RYDER	54 RYDER	49 BURGESS	50 BURGESS	51 BURGESS	52 BURGESS	53 BURGESS	54 BURGESS
55 RYDER	56 RYDER	57 RYDER	58 RYDER	59 RYDER	60 RYDER	55 BURGESS	56 BURGESS	57 BURGESS	58 BURGESS	59 BURGESS	60 BURGESS
61 RYDER	62 RYDER	63 RYDER	64 RYDER	65 RYDER	66 RYDER	61 BURGESS	62 BURGESS	63 BURGESS	64 BURGESS	65 BURGESS	66 BURGESS
67 RYDER	68 RYDER	69 RYDER	70 RYDER	71 RYDER	72 RYDER	67 BURGESS	68 BURGESS	69 BURGESS	70 BURGESS	71 BURGESS	72 BURGESS
73 RYDER	74 RYDER	75 RYDER	76 RYDER	77 RYDER	78 RYDER	73 BURGESS	74 BURGESS	75 BURGESS	76 BURGESS	77 BURGESS	78 BURGESS
79 RYDER	80 RYDER	81 RYDER	82 RYDER	83 RYDER	84 RYDER	79 BURGESS	80 BURGESS	81 BURGESS	82 BURGESS	83 BURGESS	84 BURGESS
85 RYDER	86 RYDER	87 RYDER	88 RYDER	89 RYDER	90 RYDER	85 BURGESS	86 BURGESS	87 BURGESS	88 BURGESS	89 BURGESS	90 BURGESS
91 RYDER	92 RYDER	93 RYDER	94 RYDER	95 RYDER	96 RYDER	91 BURGESS	92 BURGESS	93 BURGESS	94 BURGESS	95 BURGESS	96 BURGESS
97 RYDER	98 RYDER	99 RYDER	100 RYDER	101 RYDER	102 RYDER	97 BURGESS	98 BURGESS	99 BURGESS	100 BURGESS	101 BURGESS	102 BURGESS

## TOMORROW'S HEADLINE

## Tennis played at Wimbledon

It could be the unlikely event since Ili Nastase went through a match without swearing at a linesman. Daring spectators may be stirred from under their waterproofs and required to witness the strange sight of a ball being struck back and forth. Umpires may have to reacquaint themselves with the game's arcane scoring system. The backgammon schools that have flourished in the changing rooms could be closed down, to the particular dismay of Tim Henman. Those who like the idea that there's tennis going on somewhere in the distance while they get down to the more serious business of eating and drinking may finally be satisfied. And the bloke at the BBC who has to find the music to go with those rainy-day pictures may be out of a job. But then again, maybe not.

Simon O'Hagan

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